Beyond the Stained Glass

A Living History of First Baptist Church

Shelby, North Carolina

160 Years on Mission Together
1847-2007

...continued from back cover

And it is still on mission! The church's next history book will take up events from January 1, 2008. Already in 2008 young people have been on mission in Charleston, SC. Several adults have been to Louisiana to assist Katrina flood victims. First Baptist Pastor Tony Tench and his family will be summer missionaries to Malowi and Macedonia. Also, a member will be preaching in Germany and serving there as interim minister in a local church; some will attend the 2008 Baptist World Alliance Youth Conference in Leipzig, Germany. Others will be working on college campuses with Campus Crusade; flying patients to distant medical centers; working in refugee camps, orphanages, and in natural disaster relief; and participating in mission trips to Peru, Brazil, Australia, Nicaragua, and Israel.

In other words, First Baptist Church of Shelby has been on mission all these years, is still on mission, and will continue on mission...

As we live to see God's Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven.

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A Living History of First Baptist Church
Shelby, North Carolina

160 Years on Mission Together
1847-2007

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to those servants of God who have gone before us - those men and women who equipped believers with the truth of God's Word, who reached out to the world around them, who gave of their time and resources to spread the Gospel here and other places– those men and women who lived lives, though not perfect, that became models for the next generation.

We honor those who obeyed God's call to be His servants so that His kingdom may come "on earth as it is in heaven." To these we dedicate this work.

Z. Smith Reynolds Library
Wake Forest University

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Acknowledgments

Any project of this magnitude requires many people to complete it. The desire to write First Baptist Church history from 1969-2007 was greater than our knowledge of how to accomplish it. With many minds working together we have seen our goal accomplished.

First, our gratitude goes to Charles DeWeese, former executive director of Baptist History and Heritage Society in Brentwood, Tennessee, who came at our request to inform us of what is involved in writing and publishing a history. Even though we realized what was involved in time, money, and writing ability, the Ad Hoc History Writing committee along with the Historian and the Heritage Team decided to proceed.

The work began to take shape when J. A. West, retired attorney, newspaper columnist, and member of First Baptist Church, agreed to be the writer. Becky Hamrick and Polly Causby, retired English teachers, agreed to edit and proofread.

J. A. did a mammoth job working long hours to bring life to cold facts. The committee had been advised that a writer for a work of this magnitude would cost thousands of dollars. But J. A. offered to do the task *pro bono*.

His wife Evelyn gave up her sun porch for his office. For weeks she stepped over stacks of paper that were not to be touched. For her help and patience goes a big "thank you."

Without diligent researchers this project would not have been possible. Sue Smith, Lynn Moss, Barbara Hall, Becky Hamrick, Jo Ann Surratt, Nancy Mercier, Carolyn McCraw, Polly Causby, Joe Suttle, and Wes Westmoreland spent weeks pouring over past *Informers*, church business minutes, deacons' minutes, and newspaper clippings.

Transcribing J. A.'s manuscript was ably done by Dianne Spangler, church publications secretary.

Dianne Travis, Ministry Coordinator, was invaluable as she secured records from the records room. Her knowledge of the church provided much information.

Gail Adams, Administrative Coordinator, advised us on financial matters.

Wes Westmoreland advised us on the logistical matters of publishing the book.

David Grose was in charge of photography and ably gathered from his files most of the pictures needed for the book.

David Causby was in charge of promoting and distributing the book.

Pastor Tony Tench became our encourager as he added thoughts and information to be included at various points. His organizational and writing skills are evident throughout the book.

Many members were interviewed and related experiences and stories in their fields. Their comments indeed make this a "living history."

Grateful thanks go the estates of Mamie Lou Bridges and Everett Cabiness for their generosity in sharing their estates with the church. Some of these monies were used in the publication of this historical work.

Scores of people from the membership have worked in many events and programs. A multitude of workers and teachers have faithfully helped shape our history for the last 38 years. A listing of these people would be unwieldy, and we beg your understanding if your name has not been included. We recognize your part and give thanks.

—Polly Willis Causby, Church Historian

Prologue

The first history of First Baptist Church covered the years 1847 through 1969. It was the work of church historian Hubbard Hamrick and writer Grace Hamrick. That book can be found in the church library, and the real history buff will want to read it.

For the rest of us this church history summarizes the first history from 1847 through 1969. However, it only covers highlights about some of those early people and events.

Back when Polly Causby was Polly Willis and served as Church Historian (which she still does), she convinced the deacons and the church to finance a new church history to bring things up to date. She and the Heritage Team then recruited many church members to serve as researchers and recruited J. A. West (that's me) to write up what the researches uncovered.

Work began early in 2006. The entire year was spent squeezing facts out of 36 years of church newsletters, deacons' meeting minutes, and church conference minutes. To our consternation we ended up with sparse facts that were dry and repetitious. We decided to ask our members what they remembered about those years in order to add to and inject life into the facts we had collected. This living history is the result.

The members of First Baptist Church have been on mission together for 160 years and their labor for the Lord has carried them far beyond the church's stained glass windows.

J.A. West, writer; Polly Causby, historian & co-editor, Becky Hamrick, co-editor

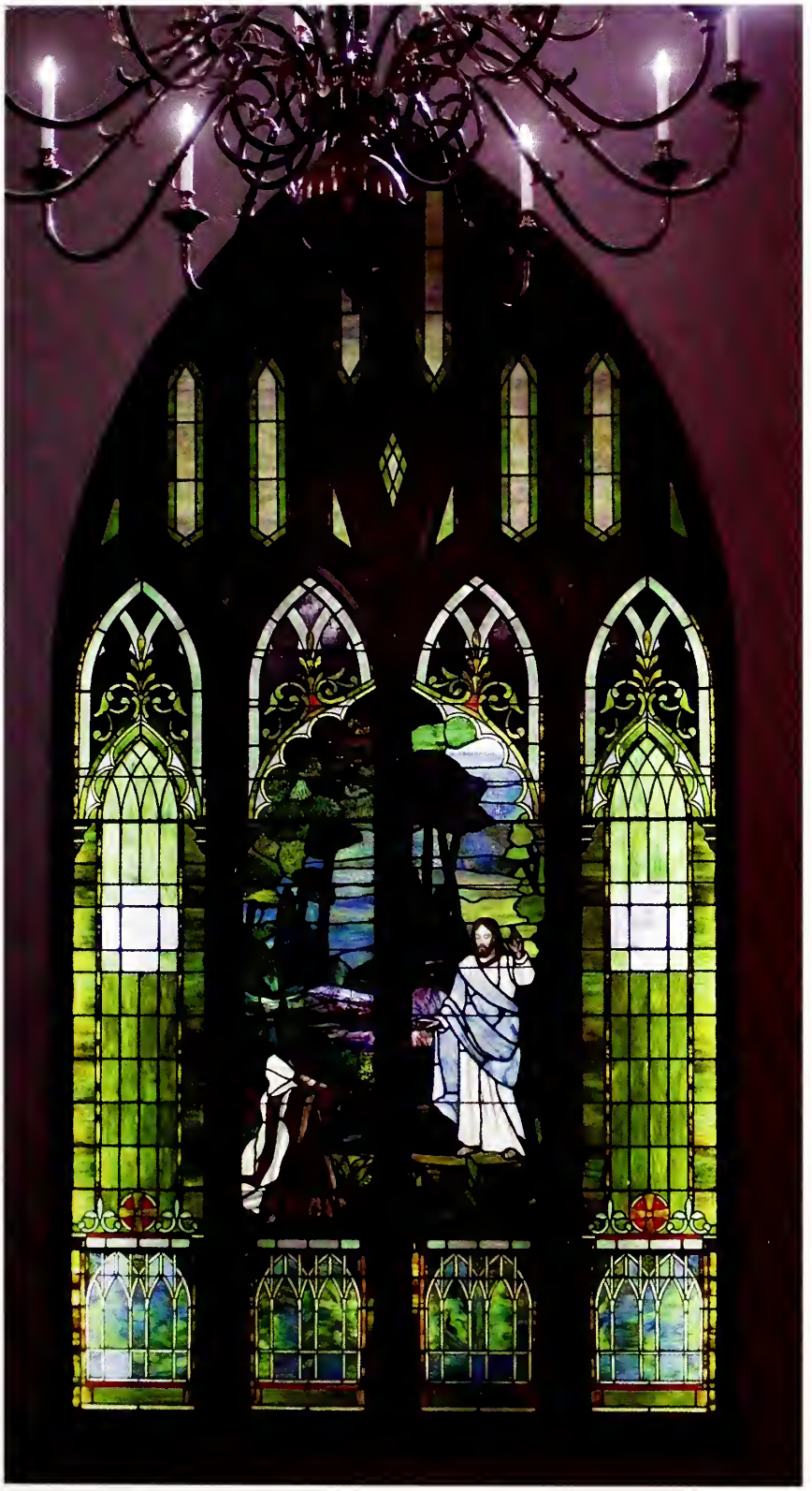
Back in the 1940's there was a novelty song that should be the anthem for those of us working on this history. As I recall, it started out "Well, all right. A dig, dig, dig. Well, all right!" Somewhere along the way the lyrics say, "We don't know where we're going, but we're going. Yes we're going. The only thing we know is that we're going."

We are all amateurs, and we don't know what we're doing! But we're doing it anyway! Buckle your seat belts!

Well, all right!

—*J. A. West*

Beyond the Stained Glass



The risen Jesus' last physical appearance on earth was on a mountain before hundreds of men, women, and children. He looked them in the eye and ordered every one of them to go everywhere telling the Good News about Jesus and teaching people to obey His commands (Matthew 28:18-20). He ascended into the heavens with all that crowd watching. As they stood there, trying to get a last glimpse of Jesus, two angels appeared, asked why they were staring up at the sky, and reminded them that Jesus would come again (Acts 1:9-11). Maybe the angels were reminding the people that in the meantime they should be carrying out Jesus' orders instead of standing around looking at the sky.

We admire and support people who are "called into full-time Christian service." The truth of the matter is that all people are called into full-time Christian service. We may earn our living some other way, but our orders from Jesus are for all of us to be on mission for Him all the time.

The members of First Baptist Church of Shelby, North Carolina, have acknowledged through the years by their words and actions that they are all on mission for God, and this history is a record of their commitment and service within the congregation and beyond the stained glass windows.

Time Line
First Baptist Church of Shelby
1847 – 2007

1847 Shelby Baptist Church (now First Baptist Church of Shelby) was organized on June 19, 1847, with Rev. James M. Webb as its first pastor and met in a meeting house built in 1846.

1847 Church joined the Broad River Association, switched to Kings Mountain Association in 1856, back to Broad River Association in 1858, and finally to the Kings Mountain Association in 1871.

1847 Church services were held monthly, then twice a month starting in 1876, and then weekly starting in 1884.

1847 From founding until 1890's men and boys sat on the left of the church while women and girls sat on the right.

1847 Slaves and ex-slaves were members of the church until 1871 and sat in the balcony.

1851 First wedding took place in the church.

1864 Sunday school organized. Met on Saturday, switched to Sunday afternoon in 1880 and to Sunday morning in 1912.

1867 First Baptist Church members encouraged the beginning of a new church,
The Shiloh Baptist Church, the first African-American church in Shelby.

1871 First indoors baptism. Previously they were in rivers and streams.

1875 Hosted the NC Baptist Convention. Also hosted in 1890, 1913, and 1929.

1876 Sunday evening services began.

1800's Members could be "turned out" for many reasons, including for missing three services without a good reason.

1889 Second church building erected. First parsonage built. Second parsonage built in 1924.

1891 WMU raised money for missionaries and elected first president in 1902. Changed from circles to action groups in 1968.

1900 Sent two missionaries to China.

1908 Shelby Baptist Church became First Baptist Church of Shelby.

1910 The third church building, the present sanctuary with its stained glass windows, was built.

1911 First pipe organ installed. First paid music director in 1912.

1912 Baptist Young People's Union organized - became Baptist Training Union in 1928.

1921 Women first elected to Deacon Board. Becky Hamrick became first woman Deacon Chair in 1996.

1923 First church budget adopted.

1927 Sponsored first Boy Scout troop.

1927 Choir first wore robes.

1928 "Old" education building was built next to the existing building and the existing building became the enlarged, remodeled sanctuary.

1929 First Vacation Bible School served 425 children.

1934 Sunday school attendance was 1583 during a revival.

1947 Veterans of WWII started Men's Brotherhood.

1949 *The Informer*, church weekly newsletter, started.

1953 "New" education building was built containing Webb Chapel, which became the site for prayer meetings, church conferences, and Sunday evening services.

1968 WMU "circles" became WMU "action groups."

1969 First church history was published.

1969 Dr. Gene Watterson began 26 years as pastor. From 1970 through 1973 the church was in a building program that enlarged the sanctuary and built the activities building.

1969 Deaf class started.

1970 Worship services first televised on local access cable.

1971 The Good News Singers of America, a Cleveland County youth choir, performed in the officially atheistic USSR.

1972 The bus ministry started with four buses and a children's church for neighborhood children.

1974 Glenn Davenport began his 23 years first as Minister of Youth and then Minister of Adults and Activities.

1974 The Keenagers, FBC senior adult organization, began with 120 members ages 60-100 years. Glenn Davenport along with Mrs. Clara Angel directed the group.

1975 Northside Baptist Church began as a mission of First Baptist Church. It was chartered as a church in March of 1976.

1976 Child Development Center started.

1976 First Baptist elected two women as deacons for the first time in 25 years. Mrs. Mae Stroup and Mrs. Jessie Forney were elected.

1977 History room started by church historian Hubbard Hamrick.

1978 Billy Cooper began his 10 years as Minister of Education.

1979 Bob Dills began his 22 years as Minister of Music.

1979 Prayer Room started.

1981 Christian Singles Conference hosted at First Baptist featuring Dr. Dorothy Sizemore of Meredith College, Clinical Psychologist John Rosemond, Dr. Robert Cook of Meredith College, and Dr. Robert Lee Newton, Director of Christian Family Life for the NC State Baptist Convention.

1982 North Carolina State Baptist Convention Adult Handbell Festival was held at First Baptist ending with a mini-concert in the gymnasium.

1985 Began feeding the poor and homeless every Friday.

1985 A & H Art and Stained Glass Co., Inc., of Harmony restored the sanctuary windows at a contract price of $17,500. The windows, installed in 1910, have been repaired one other time in 1956 at a cost of $2,500.

1985 $1 million renovation of Sunday School classrooms to accommodate smaller classes is completed.

1986 "Good News America, God Loves You" is the theme of Southern Baptist Convention churches' simultaneous revival featuring an inspirational rally at First Baptist with Dr. Alastair Walker, pastor of First Baptist in Spartanburg, SC, as speaker.

1987 Dr. Gene Watterson elected to serve as First Vice President of North Carolina Baptist State Convention at the meeting in Greensboro.

1988 Children's moments began at Sunday morning worship.

1989 Dr. Gene Watterson seeks presidency of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention against Rev. Eugene Ridley and Rev. Billy Cline.

1990 The *Informer* became *First Edition*, then *Informer* again in 1996.

1991 A Christmas cantata was presented by the 45 singers of the Sanctuary Choir with a 20-piece orchestra. Mark Cabaniss, a former First Baptist member, conducted the musical which he helped to produce.

1991 Deacon of the Week started.

1991 Men of First Baptist Church host a "Celebration Service" of the US and allied victory in the Persian Gulf War. A free barbecue was served to all who attended honoring the families of those who had served in the war. More than 1000 people gathered.

1992 "And He Still Made the Sun Rise," an Easter drama, was performed at Malcolm Brown Auditorium by members of First Baptist Church music ministry. The guest director was David Danner, the writer.

1996 Church incorporated.

1996 Volunteer receptionist started in order to give a personal voice to phone calls.

1996 Jamaica Mission Trip with youth and adults from First Baptist Church.

1996 A dinner with 456 reservations honoring Dr. Gene Watterson and wife Yvonne on his retirement was postponed for one week because of snow that cancelled Sunday's services.

1997 Dr. Robert Canoy became Pastor.

1997 Incubators for infants were sent to a small hospital serving people living in the Himalayan Mountains. Baptist Men of First Baptist teamed up with World A Resources Center at Gardner-Webb University on this project. Harold Causby and Dick Kelly coordinated the packing through Baptist Men.

1997 Youth started "Hanging of the Green" during Christmas advent.

1997 Polly Willis Causby and Rachel Schenck initiated "Parade of the Flags" during Christmas to emphasize missions.

1997 Children Bible bearers started at Sunday morning service.

1997 The first of three consecutive Passion Week performances of Da Vinci's *Last Supper* staged in the Sanctuary during which each apostle stepped from the painting to ask himself, and the congregation, "Is it I?"

1998 The North Carolina Baptist Singers, directed by Neal Eller of the Baptist State Convention and Mary Alice Seals, Associate Dean at Gardner-Webb's Divinity School, sang at First Baptist Church. Eller was a young singer in Roland Leath's choirs.

1998 Tony Tench called as Minister of Education and Missions.

1998 Ann Lampley Pharr, kindergarten teacher at First Baptist's Day Care Center, was honored by the North Carolina Church Weekday Education Association as the Teacher of the Year.

1998 Greatest Treat Festival was held at First Baptist Church

1998 Carol Ann Hoard was called as Minister of Students and Activities.

1999 Four Days for Our Future revival week called First Baptist to live as a REAL church to see God's kingdom come "On Earth as it is in Heaven."

1999 Millennium Prayer Walk host in First Baptist's Dover Activities Building as a part of Uptown Shelby's Y2K New Year's Eve celebration. The gym was open for prayer walkers throughout the evening before the community gathered on Lafayette Street to welcome a new millennium in a truly electric atmosphere of community spirit.

1999 First Baptist members helped organize community Prayer Walks in Uptown Shelby in conjunction with the YMCA and the National Day of Prayer

2000 Youth mission trip to Grifton, NC, to "mud out" after Hurricane Floyd.

2000 Tony Tench called as pastor.

2001 Youth mission trip to Toluca, Mexico, working with International World Changers to build a school and a church.

2001 Andy Roby called as Minister of Music.

2001 Perry Holleman called as Minister of Education.

2001 Angel Tree started for needy children.

2001 FBC Players started with Christmas play.

2002 Church Website started: www.fbcshelby.org

2002 Youth choir took mission trip to Philadelphia, PA, in cooperation with the North American Mission Board.

2002 First Baptist Church cooperated with a broad partnership of churches to distribute the *Jesus Film* to every household in Cleveland County

2003 Greatest Treat Festival started at Cleveland County Fairgrounds in cooperation with other Baptist churches.

2003 Marion School partnership began.

2003 *Café Phoenix*, a singles coffee house ministry, began.

2003 First Habitat for Humanity was "Blitz Built."

2003 First Baptist Church was honored by Shiloh Baptist Church "for your divine organizational investment in the Kingdom of God" because of the church's role in helping the foundation of the first African-American church in our city.

2004 Youth and Adults on mission to Weimar, Germany, presented the musical *Friends4Ever* with dialogue in German and music sung in English.

2005 Women of the WMU serve at MissionFest in the North Carolina Triad in conjunction with national and local WMU around Raleigh.

2005 Second Habitat for Humanity "Blitz Build."

2005 Chapel Choir Georgia Mission trip worked with refugees ministry in cooperation with the North American Mission Board.

2005 First Baptist members and bus were among first responders from Shelby to Laurel, MS, after Hurricane Katrina.

2006 October Church Conference became Annual Meeting where budget is presented.

2006 Two groups from First Baptist work with North Carolina Baptist Men in rebuilding 700+ homes in Gulfport, MS, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

2007 English as a Second Language ministry began.

2007 Youth travel on mission to Trinidad to minister God's love in song and Bible classes for children.

2007 Celebrated church's 160th anniversary.

Beyond the Stained Glass...

The Early Years on Mission in Cleveland County, 1847-1969

(Summarized from original church history of 1969)

The Early Years on Mission in Cleveland County, 1847-1969

Cleveland County Baptists

The first Baptist churches to be organized in what is now Cleveland County were Sandy Run (1788), Zion (1816), Zoar (1837), and Shelby (1847). Shelby Baptist Church changed its name to First Baptist Church of Shelby in 1908.

In the Beginning

In 1846, five years after Cleveland County was carved out of Rutherford and Lincoln counties and Shelby was started, Baptists in the area purchased a lot where the First Baptist Church sanctuary is now located and a public meeting house was erected on it. The Shelby Baptist Church, which eventually became First Baptist Church of Shelby, was organized on June 19, 1847, with Rev. James M. Webb as its first pastor and the public meeting house as its church building.

Rev. James Milton Webb, first pastor

First Pastor

James M. Webb served the church from 1847 to 1849 and was a man of many talents. His preaching was so powerful that it was said he "could make the devil cry." In addition to being a preacher he served as Clerk of Superior Court, Rutherford County representative to the North Carolina Legislature, and newspaper editor and publisher.

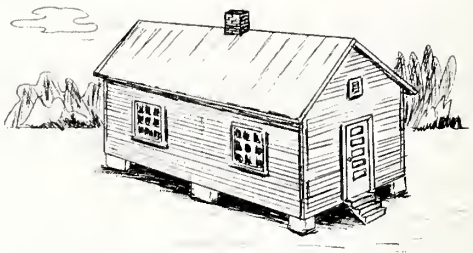
[Editor's Note: The following wording is on the dedication plaque over the door of Webb Chapel in C-building:

"Webb Chapel -
Given in Memory of
Rev. James Milton Webb
First Pastor 1846-1849
By
His Great Grand-Daughter
Mrs. O. Max Gardner
And Her Children"]

Webb chapel cornerstone is placed: Rev. John Suttle, Dr. Zeno Wall, Rev. Harlan Harris, and Roland Leath.

Early Membership

The first complete list of members of the church in 1871 showed a membership of 30 males, 49 females, with seven members serving as deacons.



Artists sketch of original Baptist Meeting House (1846-1889) as recalled by Miss Ollie Hamrick

Kings Mountain Association

The church joined the Broad River Association in 1847 but switched to the Kings Mountain Association in 1856. In 1858 the church was accused of allowing a non-Baptist to preach in the church. Though the accusation was quickly cleared up, feelings were so high that the church pulled out of the association and rejoined the Broad River Association. It rejoined the Kings Mountain Association in 1871.

[Editor's Note: The Kings Mountain Baptist Association became the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association in 2005, and the church still belongs to it.]

[Editor's Note: In order to work together, Baptist Churches in Philadelphia formed the first Associations in 1707. The first in the South was the Charleston Association formed in 1751.]

Third Building with Addition

Heaven on Earth

While Rev. J. D. Hufham was pastor (1894-1896), he got sick while attending the Southern Baptist Convention in Washington, D.C., and thought he was going to die. He asked to be taken back to Shelby because he knew that if he died there, he would go to heaven. He didn't know where he would go if he died in Washington.

[Editor's Note: Many people still have misgivings about people in Washington, D.C.]

Early Church Seating

For many years after the church was organized male members sat on the left side of the church with their sons and female members sat on the right side of the church with their daughters. This practice continued until the 1890's. [Editor's note: Many people feel the ladies are still "right."]

Sunday Worship Services

From its founding in 1847 until 1876, the church's Sunday worship services were held once a month. In 1876 they began having those services twice a month and in 1884 every week. The first Sunday night service was in 1876 and brought overflow crowds. Two Sunday morning services were tried experimentally in the 1950's and the late 1960's.

[Editors note: Since 2005 the church has had two Sunday morning services on a permanent basis.]

When to Meet

In the early days of the church, business meetings were held on Saturday night, then Friday night, and eventually Wednesday night. Sunday School was started by G. M. Webb, son of the first pastor, in 1864

and took place on Sunday afternoon. In 1903 Sunday School was held on Sunday morning before the worship service and 283 attended. For several years thereafter it was held Sunday mornings during the summer and Sunday afternoons during the winter. Since 1912 Sunday School has always been on Sunday morning before the worship service.

Third Church Building

Slaves

Slaves and former slaves were members of the church for the first 24 years of its existence, and they sat in the balcony. The last three slaves left the church in 1871, six years after the Civil War. During that war many of our pastors served as chaplains for the Confederate Army, and after the war some of them joined the Ku Klux Klan. Rev. Thomas Dixon was chaplain for the Ku Klux Klan.

[Editor's Note #1: Early Baptists had slaves and defended slavery even in their churches. The Southern Baptist Convention defended slavery early on, but condemned racism during the Civil Rights Movement. In 1995, 20,000 Baptists at the Convention in Atlanta renounced its racist roots and apologized for its past defense of slavery.]

Looking South on North Lafayette Street. Parsonage is building on left.
Note horse and wagon on unpaved street.

Second church building (1889 – 1910)

[Editor's Note #2: A member of the church, Becky Hamrick, was a delegate from the church to the 1995 Convention in Atlanta. Hamrick says it was an emotional time with mixed feelings and serious discussions.]

[Editor's Note #3: For years the church has welcomed all people regardless of race and enjoys a good working relationship with black churches, including Shiloh Baptist Church which the church helped start in 1867.]

The Dixons

Rev. Thomas Dixon served as pastor 1857 to 1859. He moved on to pastor a church in Asheville where the famous George W. Truett became one of his converts. Rev. Dixon was the first moderator of the Kings Mountain Association. He inherited slaves and served as chaplain of a Ku Klux Klan after the Civil War. During his pastorates, he organized 20 churches, baptized over 6,000 people, and married 5,000 couples.

His son, Anzi, was a child during his father's Shelby pastorate, and that child became a famous preacher. Another son, Tom Dixon, Jr., became a famous lawyer, preacher, actor, playwright, novelist, and motion picture producer. He was author of *Birth of a Nation*.

Baptism

In 1847 and for more than 20 years afterward, converts were baptized in outdoor creeks and rivers. The first indoor baptism was in 1871 in the newly built baptistery. The first baptism in our present sanctuary was in 1911.

[Editor's Note: Baptists believe in immersion during which the new believer is buried (like Jesus) in the water and raised (like Jesus) to newness of life. It takes place when a person decides to follow Jesus (not as an infant), and it is a recognition of the believer's identification with Jesus and his death for us.]

Turned Out

Courts were few and far between in the 1800's, so the church sometimes tried to patch up differences between members. If the offenses were serious enough, a member could be "turned out." Serious offenses were those like using profane language, dancing, idolatry, drinking, gambling, covetousness, playing pool, and missing three services without a good excuse.

[Editor's Note: Matthew 18 tells us to talk things over privately with an offending brother; then with several others present; then before the whole church. If this does not work, treat the offender like a pagan or a tax collector, and witness to him of God's love and justice.]

Pledge Cards

In 1897 the church decided it needed a better system for raising money. It voted to get every member to sign a written pledge indicating how much he intended to give during the church year. Until he met his pledge, he could not move his letter.

[Editor's Note #1: There is no such thing as a "church letter" that is possessed by an individual to move around as the member sees fit. It is simply a way that congregations communicate with each other verifying

that a new member has actually been a member of a previous congregation.]

[Editor's Note #2: Pledge cards were used to underwrite church budgets until the 1990's but have not been used since then.]

Church Buildings

The first building that housed Shelby Baptist Church was a wooden structure that served the congregation for 42 years. The second building, though poorly built, was used until the early 1900's.

In 1910 the church built its third building, which is the one now housing the church sanctuary. At the time it served as both sanctuary and education building. The building cost $30,000 and its stained glass windows cost $1,300. This building quickly became inadequate, so in 1928 the sanctuary was enlarged and remodeled and a fourth building was added at a cost of $225,000 to serve as an education building. The structures were joined and have the same Gothic architecture.

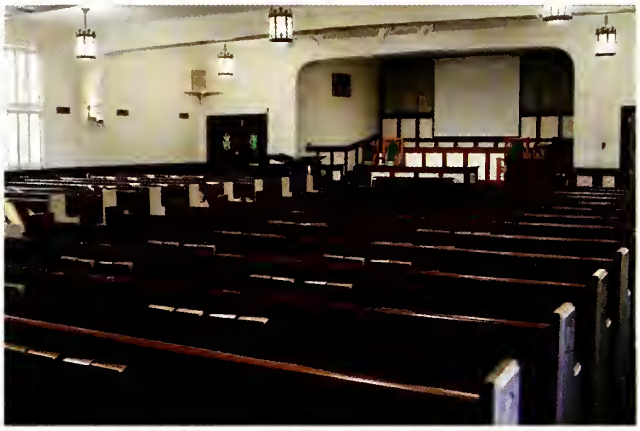
First Baptist Church Third Building
1910 – 2007 and beyond

In 1953 the church built its fifth building, another education building that included Webb Chapel, at a cost of $280,000. At the time it was called the "new education building" and the one attached to the sanctuary became the "old education building." Webb Chapel became the site for Wednesday night prayer meetings and church conferences, and eventually, for Sunday night services. The new education building was built on a lot, acquired in 1949, that was formerly used by circuses and traveling shows.

[Editor's Note #1: One of the bottom floor class rooms in the new education building has a mysterious door that opens on the lawn. This came about because the architect's Sunday School class wanted a private door so they could stand out on the lawn and pass the time of day after Sunday School before and during

First Parsonage

Second Parsonage



Webb Chapel 1953 – 2007 and beyond

"New" Education Building 1953 – 2007 and beyond

the worship service.]

[Editor's Note #2: Once the activities building was erected in the early 1970's, the buildings were officially given letter designations in the order in which they were built. Building A being the Sanctuary, Building B being the old education building, Building C being the new education building, and Building D being the activities building.]

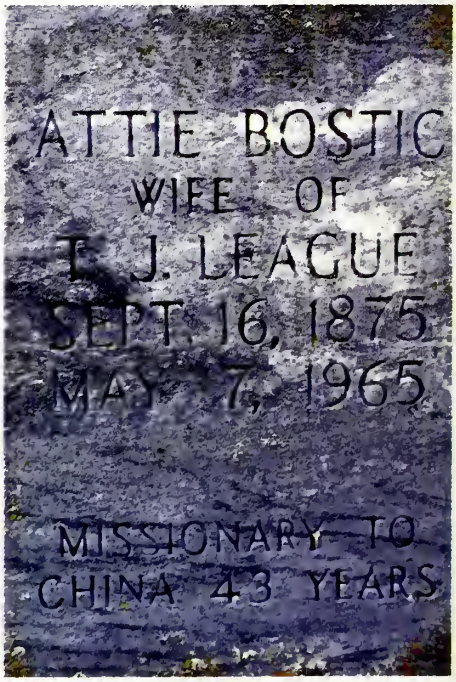
Women Deacons

Starting in 1921 the church began electing women deacons. The plan was to elect three men and two women each year, with the total Board to include 15 members. Eventually this system was abandoned in favor of electing deacons without regard to gender.

[Editor's Note: With no records to guide us and with our memories failing, we have reluctantly concluded that women did not get elected as deacons to any extent until the 1970's.]

The Bostics

Siblings Attie Bostic, G.P. Bostic, and Wade Bostic were members of the church at one time. All three went to China as missionaries in 1900. The men served in China for 43 years, and G. P. Bostic is buried there. Attie Bostic was caught up in World War II and served her last two years in a Japanese concentration camp in occupied China. When she was 68 she returned home, and when she was 72 she married. She is buried in Sunset Cemetery beside her brother.



Bostic stone in Sunset

Sunday School

The church started Sunday School in 1864. It was organized by G. M. Webb, son of the first pastor, Rev. James M. Webb. Even though worship services were only scheduled once a month at that time, Sunday School met every week. Children attended with their parents until 1904 when separate classes were set up for children.

Sunday School enrollment was 350 in1885, 500 in 1910, and 1300 in 1929. On April 15, 1934, Sunday School attendance was 1,538 during a revival. When the new education building was com-

pleted in 1953, Sunday School was completely graded by age, and this almost started a war among the ladies.

[Editors Note: Eventually, Sunday School members began failing to promote to the next age class. However, the classes they stay in inevitably continue to age, so the members in many of the classes are more or less graded by age even now.]

Church Women

Women of the church were promoting missions by 1889, and they were probably doing so before that time. They started a Sunbeam Band for children in 1897 and a mission group for Young Ladies in 1900. The women's organization was formalized in 1902 when they elected Mrs. E.A. Harrison as their first president of the Woman's Missionary Society (W.M.S.).

From the early 1900's the Women's Missionary Society held general meetings and formed small groups or circles in order to emphasize missions. By 1960 there were so many circles that separate organizations were formed for day circles and night circles. In 1968 the W.M.S. became the Women's Missionary Union (W.M.U.) and reorganized into Bible study groups, mission book clubs, prayer groups, and mission action groups.

Church Men

In 1947 members of our church who were veterans of World War II started the Veterans Brotherhood to promote the Lord's work. Almost immediately they changed their name to First Baptist Brotherhood and invited all male members to join. Eventually they were supporting 10 or 12 missionaries. Through the Fisherman's Club they set out to win people for Christ. They also sponsored the Royal Ambassadors for small boys, an organization started by the W.M.U.

Veteran's Brotherhood scan from 100th Anniversary Bulletin

B.Y.P.U. and B.T.U.

First Baptist Church hired E. A. Ruppe as its first director of education and music. He organized the Baptist Young People's Union (B.Y.P.U.) to train young people to serve as active Christians. In 1929* the organization's name was changed to Baptist Training Union (B.T.U.), and adults became a part of it. By 1969 there were 545 young people and adults involved in B.T.U.

*According to records at Lifeway Christian Resources the date was actually 1935.

Living history comments:

Herman Best: During World War II, Dr. Wall saw Army recruits off on the bus. When he saw me, he said, "They are getting the Best."

Eloise Spangler: Dr. Wall was criticized by some members for letting a woman get baptized in a swimming cap. He was a hell fire and damnation type of preacher....

Jim Horn: As a child, I thought Dr. Wall was sort of like God. As an adult, I remember he was criticized for playing golf at the Country Club and was quoted as saying if he ever got a hole in one, no one would ever believe it....

Avery McMurry: Dr. Wall came to my Sunday School department, divided the children into two groups with members on one side of the room and non-members on the other and then invited the non-members to accept Christ, come across, and join the church. I joined the church then, but I didn't really become a Christian until I was much older.

Lee Gilliatt: Harlan was young and energetic and started Young Life in Shelby. Some members criticized him for letting Young Life meet in the parsonage and for engaging in their activities so energetically as to break his leg. He took young people to Young Life Camp in Colorado every year. He invited evangelist Billy Graham to Shelby, and that is when I accepted Christ. Harlan was a classmate of Jim Rabon who started Young Life nationally.

Jim Horn: At the last minute Harlan talked me into going to Young Life Camp in Colorado even though my parents were out of town and unable to give permission. My brother Charlie was already going, and the only reason I had not signed up before was because of a scheduling conflict that disappeared.

J. A. West: Harlan had a reputation as a fast driver. If you were going out of town with him, he would pull over just

Sharing Ministerial Duties 1847-1969

E. A. Ruppe became the first paid director of education and music in 1912. Prior to that the pastor and volunteers fulfilled those functions. Harry Pippin succeeded him in 1924 and was in turn succeeded by J. O. Reynolds in 1927. Horace Easom came in 1928 and stayed until 1947 except for 1934 – 1936 when he left to serve elsewhere. Harry C. Seefelt served during those two years, and Mr. & Mrs. Joe Hamrick succeeded Easom in 1947. Harlan Harris served briefly in 1948 prior to becoming pastor. Roland Leath came in 1950. Roland was everything except pastor, until some of his duties were shifted to youth director Jimmy Sides in 1956 and music director John Ward in 1966. Van Ramsey became music director in 1967. Carole Pearson became youth director in 1960, and Mel Doughty succeeded her in 1967.

Early Miscellaneous

The North Carolina State Baptist Convention met in this church in 1875, 1890, 1913, and 1929.

Evangelist Billy Sunday preached to an overflow crowd of members and guests in 1924.

The first Vacation Bible School was conducted when the 1928 building program was completed.

First Baptist has helped organize and support several new churches, including Second Baptist, Highland, Churchill Drive, Calvary, Peach Street, Northside, and Christopher Road.

The church started Boy Scout Troop No. 2 in 1927, and it became Boy Scout Troop No. 101 in 1967 and still exists.

Dr. Zeno Wall

Dr. Zeno Wall was pastor from October 1, 1925, until January 27, 1948. Church membership grew from 736 to over 2,500, with 1,484 being baptized and 2,095 joining by transfer of church letter. Under his leadership the church budget increased from $28,000 to $131,225.57. He was president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention for four terms from 1933 – 1936.

Dr. Zeno Wall

Dr. Wall preached and Horace Easom conducted the music

for a revival in the 1930's following 161 cottage prayer meetings in the homes of members. The end result was that 217 people were added to the church.

In the early 1900's and during the Great Depression of the 1930's the church and its members provided financial support for Boiling Springs High School. For a time Dr. Wall served as president of the school without pay. In the early 1940's music and education director Horace Easom led a fund drive that enabled the school to become a two year junior college. It was renamed Gardner-Webb Junior College in honor of its main benefactors. The church and its members have continued to support the college through the years.

Rev. Harlan Harris

Rev. Harlan Harris

Rev. Harlan Harris came to First Baptist as assistant to Dr. Wall in January 1948. Less than three months later, Dr. Wall retired, and Rev. Harris served as pastor from 1948 to 1954. During his pastorate the new educational building was constructed, and the Sunday School was reorganized. He was very much involved with the young people of the church and with the community helping to start the Young Life organization. At his request his seminary classmate, Billy Graham, held a revival meeting in the Shelby Armory. He was Shelby's "Young Man of the Year" in 1952. During his six years as pastor he baptized 357 people and 633 joined the church by transfer of letter. Average Sunday School attendance went from 825 to 1,079, and average Training Union attendance went from 130 to 206. The church budget went from $65,000 to $106,000.

Rev. John Lawrance

Rev. John Lawrence

John Lawrence started out as a lawyer, served in the Navy during World War II, then went to

outside town, have a prayer, and then drive like a bat to his destination. One time at a Training Union party at Roland Leath's house, he decided to leave even though his car was trapped in the driveway. He cut across the neighbor's backyard and went down the neighbor's driveway.

Another time Evelyn and I were at Messick's Soda Shop, where City Hall is now located, when Harlan and our visiting evangelist joined us. The two of them talked in shocked tones about how some of their seminary classmates had become liberal.

Janet Leath Martin: In the early 1950's Harlan Harris was our pastor and my father Roland Leath was Minister of Music and Education. The church was having a series of inspirational movies on Wednesday nights. The old projector they used was furnished by banker Jessie Bridges and was on its last legs. They decided to borrow a newer one from Principal Wilbur Wilson. After Wilbur agreed to the loan but before Jessie was told, Jessie and the preacher got into a conversation about the old projector, and Jessie suggested they borrow one from Wilbur. Harlan and Roland readily agreed, "Good idea, good idea," so Harlan picked up the phone and faked a conversation with Wilbur. As he hung up, Wilbur walked in with his projector. Harlan covered up the situation with his booming voice, thanked a puzzled Jessie and Wilbur and ushered them out of the office. Then he and Roland "rolled on the floor" laughing. After that, "Good idea, good idea!" was a phrase that put both of them in gales of laughter.

Hoyle Davis: We were building the new education building in 1952, and a giant crane was lifting large steel beams into place. Our 32 year old preacher, Harlan Harris, persuaded Jack Ramsey, the contractor, to give him a ride on the cable. He mounted the cable and Jack had him swinging high all over the building.

Joe Cabaniss: John and Laura Lawrence visited Shelby, and John was praying about possibly coming here. Dr. Wall told Laura to start packing while John prayed....

Evelyn West: John came to a circle meeting right after he came to Shelby, and as we left, he named the 20 or so women who were present. He did the same thing with 50 or 60 men who attended a Kiwanis meeting that J. A. attended a short while later....

Jim Horn: When mother died, Roland Leath was out of town, so John sang "How Great Thou Art." He had a beautiful voice.

Herman Best: John believed in Training Union. We had 700 active members of B.T.U. in those days.

Ed Spangler: John opposed spending money on the parsonage where he lived so the money could go to missions.

J. A. West: The first time John suggested that we air condition the church, I opposed it as a waste of the Lord's money. The second time it came up, I didn't open my mouth.

Eloise Spangler: Dr. Feezor would pray our congregation to heaven and back....

Joe Cabaniss: He had a hearty handshake that would knock you down if you were not prepared for it. On the golf course, Dr. Feezor would shout, "Fore, Lord!" when he gave the ball a good whack....

Evelyn West: He was well into his 80's when he came to us, but I remember his saying that every time he got trapped behind a slow moving car, it turned out to be a little old man in a hat.

Becky Hamrick: My husband was at the lake with Dr. McClain when an accident put him in a confused state. Thereafter, he jokingly said that Vason was one person who knew him when he was out of his head. No telling what he may have said – secrets and all.

seminary and became a minister. He served First Baptist Church from 1954 until 1964. During those years, the church budget went from $97,000 to $252,000 with half of it going to missions. During his tenure, the church sanctuary was remodeled and air conditioned, and for the first time the church adopted a Constitution and By-Laws.

Dr. Forrest Feezor

Dr. Forrest Feezor was interim pastor from September 1964 to March 1965, but he made an indelible impression during those brief months. He had served as minister of several churches, Voice of America speaker during the Cold War, and executive secretary of the Texas Baptist Convention. (The congregation felt that he was talking to God face to face when he prayed.)

Rev. Forrest Feezor

Dr. Joe McClain

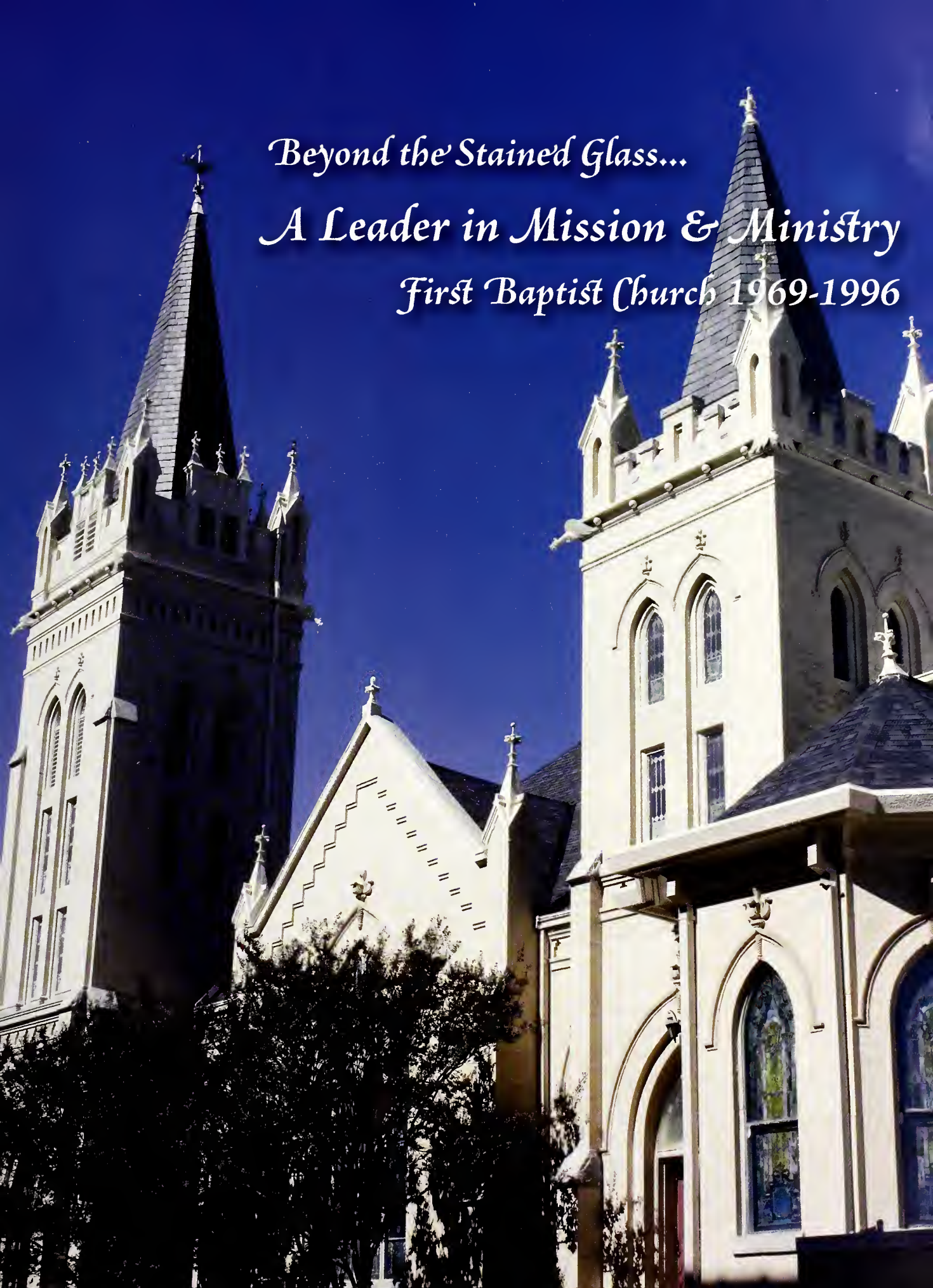
Dr. Joe McClain was pastor from 1965 to 1968. He was a scholarly person with social tendencies more liberal than Shelby was used to.

Dr. Joe McClain

Beginning of a New Era

Gene Watterson came to Shelby in the summer of 1969, and our first church history came out a few weeks later. When Rev. Watterson assumed his duties as senior pastor, his ministerial team was Roland Leath, Van Ramsey, and Mel Doughty. Ginny Spears and Mary Sue Thompson were a part of his support staff, and they are still active in our church.

Rev. Watterson preached his first sermon at First Baptist on July 27, 1969. At that time the church had 2,225 members and was sixth largest among the 3,456 Baptist Churches in North Carolina. It was second in Foreign Mission giving, fifth in Training Union enrollment, fourth in Sunday School attendance, and first in Brotherhood enrollment.



Beyond the Stained Glass...

A Leader in Mission & Ministry

First Baptist Church 1969-1996

A Leader in Mission & Ministry

First Baptist Church 1969-1996

Dr. Gene L. Watterson

Rev. Gene L. Watterson, our thirty-second pastor, preached his first sermon at First Baptist on July 27, 1969. A native of Decatur, GA, his previous pastorates were at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, VA (1953 – 1960), First Baptist Church of Crestview, FL (1960 – 1966), and Murray Hill Baptist Church in Jacksonville, FL (1966 – 1969).

Dr. Gene Watterson 1969 – 1996

Rev. Watterson did his undergraduate study at Howard College (now Samford Baptist University) and Bob Jones University. He did graduate study at Richmond Professional Institute of the College of William and Mary and is a graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also received special training in clinical counseling at Central State Hospital, Petersburg, VA.

This and more detailed information about his background can be found in "A History of First Baptist Church" published in 1969. It is repeated here because he was the pastor of FBC starting in 1969 and continuing for 26 years, which is the longest pastoral tenure to date in this church.

In 1974 Rev. Watterson was given an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Gardner-Webb University. Thereafter, he was referred to as "Dr. Watterson."

During 1994 "*The Informer*" summarized Dr. Watterson's accomplishments in 25 of his 26 years as pastor of First Baptist Church as follows:

Through Dr. Watterson's leadership, First Baptist sponsored the Northside Baptist Church Mission; contributed to the sponsorship of the Christopher Road Baptist Church Mission;

Living History comments from members:

Jim Horn: In 1970 Gene helped organize the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Shelby High School, one of the oldest FCAs in the US. He led the teams in prayer before each game and provided counseling as needed.

Becky Hamrick: During the massive building and remodeling program of the 1970's, Gene preached at the Rogers Theater and baptized people in the City Park pool.

Joe Cabaniss: During one of our revivals, response was so strong the first week that Dr. Watterson continued the revival for a second week.

Dr. Watterson: The church services were overcrowded and enthusiastic. Never before had I experienced such a comfortable preaching environment. The church auditorium was in the round so that the speaker was almost in the center of the crowd. My foundational message was 1 Corinthians 2:2: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Mary Sue Thompson and Ginny Spears ran the offices....Roland Leath was the gold standard as Associate Pastor and Minister of Education.... Music Minister Van Ramsey was a musical magnet for young people.... Youth Minister Mel Doughty's long suit was drama.

Glenn Davenport was our longest tenured Minister of Youth (23 years). He was best known for his "disciple youth" Bible studies. His desk, to the casual observer, was a disaster. However, in all of those years I never asked for something that he could not produce quickly. His ministry to senior adults was such that I was once told "the state builds the roads and our church bus wears them out."

Some education ministers simply maintained existing programs, but Bob Riddle helped establish the Day Care Ministry, Billy Cooper totally reorganized the educational wing of the church, and Mike Johnson established Continuing Witness Training.

During my tenure as pastor at First Baptist Church, we were blessed by the effort and expertise and dedication of many others who served on the ministerial staff, office staff, and support staff. I especially call attention to Mrs. Hubert Plaster who played the organ for over 52 years.

I choose three dates to recall: On June 15, 1972, we had our last service in the in-the-round sanctuary and people stood around reminiscing. November

gave over $3,000,000 to the Cooperative Program; gave over $5,000,000 to total mission giving (top ten in total giving within the N. C. State Convention and top 500 total giving within the Southern Baptist Convention for Home Missions); for two years, the church gave the largest total in the state to Home Mission offering; built the C. I. Dover Family Life Center; renovated all church buildings; purchased Washington Street property; installed an elevator in the main building; purchased four vans. All property was debt free. Total receipts were over $104,000,000, and property value increased to over $7,000,000.

New ministries were begun under his leadership

The Keenager Ministry for senior adults; Sunday School for hearing impaired and interpretation at worship services; internship program for college students; the deacon family ministry; intercessory prayer ministry; T. V. ministry; Northside Children's Center; BTN installation; bus evangelism; unwed mothers support program; tape ministry; Child Care Center; sponsored 2 Vietnamese families; housed preschool program of N. C. School for Deaf; abuse prevention services; parent support group; and Adult Day Care.

Through his ministry, Dr. Watterson served in offices on the local, state, and Southern Baptist Convention level:

Locally he has served as Chairman of the Commission of Housing and Urban Redevelopment, as a member of the Human Relations Council, on the Board of Directors of the Boys Club, as a member of the Shelby Rotary Club, on the Board of Trustees of the Christian Action League, was appointed by the governor to serve as a member of the Council on the Family, and served on committees for the Kings Mountain Baptist Association.

In the State Convention, he served as a member of the General Board, on the Executive Committee, on the Council of Christian Life, and as President of the Council on Christian Higher Education. He has served as First Vice-President and President of the Baptist State Convention.

In the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Watterson served on the Executive Committee for two terms totaling eight years on the Program and Budget Committee, the Business and Finance Committee, and the Audit Committee.

During his ministry

Over 760 came to know the Lord as their Saviour through baptism with over 2000 joining by transfer of letter or by state-

ment. Through these twenty-six and one-half years, he touched many lives at times of sadness, during illnesses, where counseling was needed, and at times of death (conducted over 1200 funerals). He was there for the happier times, during births, for baptisms, and for weddings (conducted over 700). He saw a generation of babies grow to adulthood and for many of them, Dr. Watterson is the only pastor they have ever known.

Provide Space and They Will Come

The pastor's search committee recommended Rev. Gene L. Watterson as our thirty-second pastor. He preached his first sermon at our church on July 27, 1969.

It was apparent from the outset that Gene Watterson was the preacher our search committee claimed him to be. The word spread, and the crowds came. People who had not been to church in a long time started coming back. Members brought friends. The sanctuary was filled. By the time 1970 rolled around, there was talk about televising the Sunday morning service and equipping Webb Chapel so it could handle any overflow crowds that might come.

The February 12, 1970, "*Informer*" reported that 1,089 were in Sunday School and 271 in Training Union (before Sunday evening service). At that time there were 2,192 members, 1,949 enrolled in Sunday School, and 392 members of the Women's Missionary Union.

Attendance continued to be high, as a Planning and Building Committee was appointed to deal with the problem. On Sunday, July 28, 1970, less than a year after Gene Watterson was called to our church, J. A. West reported for the committee. The committee wanted to hire an architect, enlarge the sanctuary, build an activities building, and remodel and modernize the entire church at a cost of as much as $700,000. Members accepted the recommendation, and Lloyd Bost was appointed to head a committee to raise the necessary funds.

While the planning and fund raising was going on, crowds continued to come. About 1,400 were counted one Sunday in 18, 1973, our first day in the reconditioned sanctuary. The third date was Miracle Sunday, May 4, 1975, when we had 1,402 in attendance in Sunday School, 71 decisions in the morning worship service, and an offering of $50,004.72, far exceeding our goals.

I also recall that the Foreign Mission Board sent me to Switzerland and Hawaii where I conducted Bible classes, counseled, and preached and where my wife Yvonne sang.

Avery McMurry: Gene married my daughter in a military wedding. He also baptized all of my children. He was a great preacher and loved counseling.

Gothic style building has become Shelby landmark.

March 1971, and the fire marshal told the ushers to stop placing chairs in the aisles. Two Sunday morning worship services were started.

Finally, after two years of planning, negotiating, and raising money, contracts were signed and construction began in July 1972. The adjoining creamery building and the Clyde Short warehouse on the corner of Sumter and Washington Streets were torn down to make room for a new activities building. The sanctuary was gutted and remodeling started on the "old" education building (1928). The remodeling of the "new" education building (1954) was postponed until later so Webb Chapel and the classrooms could be used during construction. Eventually, the Rogers Theater was used for the worship services.

Since 1928 the pews in the sanctuary had been arranged in a semi-circle facing north, and the baptistry and speaker's platform had been on the north wall. In order to enlarge the capacity, a balcony was installed on the west side of the sanctuary, faced the pews to the east wall, knocked out the east wall, and extended the sanctuary out over the alley to accommodate the baptistry and choir loft. The drastic change traumatized some members, but they had to admit it was beautiful and would provide seating for lots more people.

Unfortunately, the project was enlarged until it doubled in expense to $1,245,000. A larger organ was needed for the larger sanctuary at a cost of $62,725. In order to move the old organ to Webb Chapel, $9,330 was needed. Additionally a new sound system cost $12,981.

The new education building (1954) needed a new roof along with remodeling. The contractor took the old roofing off on Friday, and over the weekend it poured down rain, turning the stairs of that building into waterfalls. That called for even more remodeling, but the insurance company paid for that.

After two years of planning and a year and a half of construction and inconveniences, members were finally able to occupy and use the church building toward the end of 1973. By the end of 1974 the entire debt was paid.

Ministers of Education

Roland Leath was Minister of Education from 1950 until 1973. He was at First Baptist when Gene Watterson became pastor in 1969. The first church history tells of his accomplishments. Four other Ministers of Education and Evangelism served during Dr. Watterson's 26 years in Shelby: Robert Riddle (1975 – 1977), Billy Cooper (1978 – 1988), Michael Johnson (1989 – 1992), and Steve Zimmerman (1993 – 1996). They were all competent and dedicated, but Billy Cooper had the longest tenure.

Roland Leath

Robert Riddle (1975 – 1977)

Robert Riddle is a native of Auburn, Alabama. He graduated from Auburn University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Before coming to Shelby First Baptist, he served at Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. His wife is Brenda and they have a daughter, Karen. While at First Baptist, "Operation Andrew" and "Tell Shelby Days" were special emphases. He formed new classes. Rebuilders was for divorced people. A couples class also began with seminar-type in-depth studies used to challenge each member. PSSTT was started to train potential Sunday School Teachers.

Billy Cooper (1978 – 1988)

Billy Cooper

Billy Cooper received his AB degree from the University of South Carolina in 1963 and his Master of Divinity degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1970. He taught school for several years, was Minister of Youth (and other things) in Columbia, Raleigh, and Charlotte, and was Minister of Education in Charlotte and Columbia before coming to First Baptist in Shelby in 1978 as Minister of Education. Since he left Shelby in 1988, he has served as Minister of Education in Nashville, Tennessee, and Director of Missions in Morganton, North Carolina. One of his daughters, Emily Monroe, has been the pianist for First Baptist since January 1, 1993.

Billy Cooper started discipleship programs, restarted Vacation Bible School, trained adult leaders, helped adult leaders plan the Sunday School year, set goals for every group, started and maintained prospect lists, and promoted evangelistic outreach.

He started a college and career department that grew into the largest singles ministry in Cleveland County. That ministry sponsored a two day singles conference in Shelby with leaders from Raleigh, Charleston, and Nashville. It also sponsored a single parenting conference with Dr. John Rosemond.

Billy started the first adult day care in Cleveland County. He brought in a leadership team to help Sunday School to reorganize and grow which led to the renovation program of 1985 to provide space for new classes and new departments.

He led mission trips to West Virginia, Montana, New York City, and Brazil.

Michael Johnson (1989 – 1992)

Michael Johnson and his wife Susan and daughter Angie were introduced to the FBC congregation on Sunday, November 5, 1989. His education included Belmont College, Nashville, Tennessee, and Union University in Jackson, Tennessee (BS 1990). His seminary training was at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Forth Worth, Texas. He came from Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, Tennessee.

Cynthia Hamrick: Billy Cooper took a group of singles on a mission trip to an Indian reservation in Montana. We tried to tell the little Indian kids Bible stories, but they didn't understand. Bob Dills and Jane Blake suggested that we act out the stories, and they were an immediate success. When cook out time came, one of the boys climbed a tree to eat his food. He had sniffed paint fumes so much that he had become animal-like.

Janet Leath Martin: Roland started what he called Singspiration in the basement of the old education building where the Weekday Ministry is now located. People of all ages would gather, eat sandwiches, and sing campfire-type choruses about God and Jesus. One time when the person who made sandwiches failed us, we got the makings and my whole family made sandwiches for Singspiration. Mark was very small then and said, "There's a whole lot more to being an education director than most people realize!"

Jean Eskridge: Roland and Lois lived across the street from us. One day I saw Roland cutting the grass with his push mower and preaching for all he was worth.

Doris Baugham Palmer: Once, while I was working at the church, Roland went to a nearby conference. When he got there, he saw me (he thought). It wasn't until after the conference that he learned that the person he saw was my twin sister.

Tommy Young: It isn't generally known, but when I was a child, I took piano lessons from Roland's mother. She had turned Roland into a master pianist, but I never caught on.

Melba McWhirter: I was leading the children's choir in our first Christmas musical when I realized Abigail Carpenter looked strange. I motioned

Roland over just as Abigail fainted.

I remember, too, when Charles Reid was on the back row of the choir and was about to go into a diabetic coma. His children were in the balcony and realized what was happening. They rushed downstairs and to the choir loft to give their father some candy.

I also recall when Charles I. Dover gave my children's choir money for costumes, with enough left over to take them to Six Flags over Georgia.

Lynn Moss: One Sunday morning when John Ward was our music director, the organ and choir seemed to be at odds with one another. John stopped the choir, and eventually stopped the organist and we started all over again. There were a lot of red faces that day, and John left the church not too long afterwards.

Jean Eskridge: Mrs. Plaster was playing the organ for a morning worship service. Paul Wilson was an usher and kept looking in the auditorium from the vestibule. Finally, he came up and whispered something to Mrs. Plaster. It turned out that her daughter, Vicky, was home making candy and wanted to know how much cocoa to use. Mrs. Plaster answered, "four tablespoons," emphasizing each word with a loud chord on the organ.

Lois Leath: One of the members brought her little boy to choir practice and asked Roland Leath to keep an eye on him. He turned out to be a handful, so Roland put him in a front row seat, telling him that he would spank the boy if Roland didn't love him so much. When mama came, her son told her, "Mr. Weath just woves me so much and wants me to sit right in front of him."

Tony Tench, while visiting with 101 year old Laurine Elliot, heard her son-in-law, Jack Logan, relate this story from the Leath years:

Jack Logan provided many of the

CWT became an important training program. Continuing Witness Training was led by Mike Johnson. Many members engaged in the program. One element was the memorization of many scriptures.

Steve Zimmerman (1993-1998)

In the fall of 1994, Steve Zimmerman coordinated classes for young parents entitled "Strong Christian Sex Education with Their Child in a Sex Crazed World,""Parenting in the Pew," and "Helping Your Child Come to a Salvation Experience."

Steve Zimmerman

He organized and promoted high Sunday School attendance with a "World Series Game Day" with classes competing for points to win the game.

"First Touch" was an outreach program to reach people for Christ and to promote church growth. Also, the "Ninety Days of Witnessing" was in preparation for a spring revival. He further coordinated arrangements to be host for the State's Children's Bible Drill.

Among the courses offered to adults for learning more about their Christian faith were "What Is the Church Anyway" and Influencing My Relationships." A summer course "The Mind of Christ" was designed for young single adults.

Zimmerman resigned in 1998 to accept a position with a High Point church.

Ministers of Music

Roland Leath, John Ward, Van Ramsey, Eddie Rackley

Van Ramsey

Roland Leath was "the music man" for First Baptist as well as the director of education, youth, and almost everything else from 1950 until the late 1960's. His duties were finally limited to education and serving as associate

pastor until he retired in 1973. Roland became especially known for his piano rendition of "Onward Christian Soldiers."

John Ward was music director from January until October of 1966 and was succeeded by Van Ramsey from 1967 until 1974 and by Eddie Rackley from 1975 to 1978. Ward's and Ramsey's service to the congregation is detailed in the church's first book of history, "A History of First Baptist Church, Shelby, North Carolina."

On the album jacket of the recording "The Good News Singers of America: Soviet Union Concert Tour 1970," Van Ramsey wrote the following about the departure of the group from the Charlotte airport and about their ministry in the USSR

"'Having confidence in your musical abilities, your integrity, and your love for our land, I appoint you and the Good News Singers of America GOOD WILL AMBASSADORS FROM NORTH CAROLINA and charge you to represent our State in the highest traditions of musical statesmanship.' These were the words written by Governor Robert W. Scott and read by Lt. Governor Pat Taylor as the choir and friends gathered at Douglas Airport in Charlotte. Mr. Taylor continued, 'When you get to Russia, don't tell them **what** we have; tell them what we **believe** and what we stand for. Tell them we believe in God and stand for liberty for all people.' With these words, the Singers embarked on a mission never before attempted by an amateur group."

"The Moscow reception was again very different. Although we were kept very busy sightseeing, impromptu singing continued on busses and in parks. Of inestimatable value to both the Russians and Americans was the singing in the Moscow Baptist Church. The only recognition of God's presence to be found in the entire city of Moscow was witnessed here. We arrived at the church one hour early expecting to rehearse, but much to our surprise the church was already filled with expectant people. Over 2,000 crowded in to hear and see these young Americans. During the singing of the final hymn, "God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again," the people with handkerchiefs in hand waived goodbye to the choir. Instantaneously, through tears of compassion, the choir began to wave back to the people. A contingent of 400 met the choir outside the church to say a further goodbye, God bless you, and "Hallelujah!" Much more could be said, but the sight of such a throng so sincerely caught up in worship caused each American to look closely at his own relationship with God. This experience will never cease to have an effect on these young people."

flowers for use in the church sanctuary in those days. His pattern was to deliver the flowers early on Sunday morning before the service. The church usually had one morning service, but often on Easter Sunday morning would have two services to accommodate all those in attendance. On one particular Easter Sunday, Jack was to bring an arrangement of flowers in the shape of a cross to be displayed in front of the pulpit. However, he forgot about the "early service" that day and was running late getting the flowers there. He came through the door of the sanctuary with the "cross arrangement" just as Roland Leath had stood the congregation for the singing of a hymn of promise, "At the Cross." Everyone thought the flower delivery had been planned for that very moment and no one was any the wiser.

Tommy Young: Van Ramsey enjoyed camping. We sometimes camped at the Kings Mountain State Park.

He had a quartet that became well known in the area.

Evelyn West: When Van and Jane were in the process of moving to Shelby, we kept their little boy for them. J.A. kidded me because he was calling me Grandmother. However, when his folks picked him up, he turned to J.A. and said, "Goodbye, Granddaddy."

Lois Leath: Van, Jane, Roland, and I were taking a youth choir somewhere. At the last minute, one father decided we didn't have enough chaperones, picked up his daughter's suitcase and started to leave. His daughter grabbed her suitcase back and said, "I told them I would go with them on this trip. You have always taught me to keep my word. I'm going with them." That ended that.

Becky Hamrick: I remember when a new hymnal was printed. Four of us went to Praise Sing in Nashville to preview the songs along with 5,000 other Baptists. Rotating the duty, we

sang hymns 24 hours a day until we had sung them all. It was a thrilling experience.

Tommy Young: Eddie Rackley was a good music director, but he had a habit of snapping his fingers to give us the right rhythm. The first time he did it, Ginny Lowery let him know that "we don't do that in our church."

J.A. West: Harvey Woodruff started the first community chorus in our county, but the present Cleveland County Choral Society was started by Eddie Rackley and incorporated by me in the late 1970's. Evelyn West was president the first two years.

Front and back of Good News Singers Album

The GOOD NEWS SINGERS of AMERICA

Soviet Union Concert Tour 1970

PERSONNEL OF THE CHOIR

Tommy Aiken
Cindy Alexander
Debbie Allen
Donald Allen
Libby Allen
Beth Anthony
Stan Anthony
Janna Beam
Jack Bell
Renee Bell
Eddie Benfield
Carol Berry
*Gwen Bissette
Amelia Bridges
Libby Bridges
Betty Bowles
Lloyd Bowles
Carliss Brown
Lisa Brunnick
Ernest Bussells
Phyllis A. Butler
Bob Causby
Wanda Causby
Janet Caveny
Pat Chamberlain
Debbie Clarke
Rosalyn Cobb
Bobby Cockerham
Caroline Connor
Susan Conrad
Edwina Crossman
Connie Crotts
Patty Davis
*Prescilla Davis
Caroline Dedmon
June Dedmon
*Deloris Douglas
Anne Eskridge
Harriet Farmer
David Fisher
Gay Francis
Denise Garver
*Barry Gaskey
Kit Griffin
Craig Grigg
Linda Hamrick
*Peter Hemenway
Ellen Hendrick
Anne Hord
Johnny Howie
Terry Hoyle
*Chris Hudson
Mark Johnson
Roger Jolly
Steve Jolly
Linda Jones
Johnson Kelly
Linda Kelly
Janet R. Kile
Doris Lancaster
Lynda Lee
Beth LeGrand
Mary Leinweber
Patricia McBrayer
Nancy McCord
Larry McGowan
Susan McMurry
Tim McSwain
Becky Macomson
Pam Maloney
*Kathy Massey
Julie Matthews
Toney Mauney
Nancy Miller
Judy Morgan
Sherri Morgan
Beth Morris
Bobby Noblitt
Susan Padgett
Jeanette Parke
*Linda Pass
Van Pernell
Mary Ann Phillips
Paula Pope
Nancy Porter
Lem Rachels
Kathy Raines
Guy Richardson
Chrystal Riviere
Debbie Rogers
Angela Ross
Leon Ross
Linda Ross
Rosemary Russell
Lou Ann Scism
Neal Scism
Gizelle Sealey
Jayne Sifford
Jane Shannon
Debbie Shearon
Suzanne Sherrill
Andrea Simerson
Mary Elizabeth Simpson
Anita Sisk
Mike Sisk
*Christy Sluss
Linda Smalley
Carol Smith
Vicki Smith
Nancy Spangler
Eddie Sparks
Ruth Starnes
Janet Stephens
Carla Stroup
Dan Stroup
Susan Swift
Edith Thompson
Terri Tolleson
Keith Tomblin
Cynthia Triplett
*Rudolph Von Evans
Teresa Waters
Melinda Watterson
Pam Watterson
Al Whatley
Donna Whitaker
Janet Whitaker
Loretta White
Debbie Williams
Joan Williams
Timmy Wentz
Kevin Worthy
Jill Wright
*Jo Anne Yates
Harriet Young
Paul Zellmer

*Soloists

Van H. Ramsey, Conductor
James A. Berry, Assistant Conductor
Patricia McBrayer, Accompanist
Dan Stroup, Manager

Counselors

Mrs. James A. Berry
Rev. Gene L. Watterson
Dr. and Mrs. J. Robinson Hicks, M.D.
Mr. and Mrs. Claude Sitton

Bob Dills (1979-2000)

Bob Dills

Bob Dills succeeded Eddie Rackley as music director for First Baptist in 1979 and served until 2000 when he retired. He was born in Kentucky in 1936, the son of a Baptist minister, and was reared in Tennessee. He has been married to his wife Jackie since 1957 and has a son, Robert Keith, and a daughter, Lisa Kelli.

Bob earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, and Bachelor of Christian Music and Master of Christian Music degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He served as youth and music ministers for several churches during his student days and as a chaplain's assistant with the U.S. Army while stationed in Germany in 1959-1960. He was Minister of Music at First Baptist Church in Ahoskie, N.C., from 1964 until he came to Shelby in 1979.

At various times he has served as music director for a region of the N. C. Baptist Convention, for the West Chowan Association, several times for Music Week at Caswell Baptist Assembly, for the Kings Mountain Baptist Association, for the continuing education program at Broyhill Academy, and for the Gardner-Webb College Concert Choir.

Children's Choir musical including "Bob Bus Driver," directed by Lisa McDowell

Bob Dills: The first Sunday I directed the choir, Billy Cooper whispered to me that the zipper on my pants was unzipped. Red faced, I maneuvered behind the speaker's stand to correct the situation, only to find there was no situation to correct. Preacher Gene Watterson had put Billy up to it as a practical joke.

I remember when worship services were cancelled on account of a heavy snow.

However, the four ministers made it to the church in order to present a televised service.

We had fifteen minutes before time to go on the air, so we were horsing and dancing around as we waited, until one of our wives called to tell us it was all being televised!

During one Sunday morning's worship service, we were all singing when smoke came pouring out of the organ. The smoke triggered an alarm at the fire station, and firemen in full regalia, carrying axes, came rushing in every door of the sanctuary and ordered everyone out of the building. It turned out that a motor that controlled a blower on the organ had caught on fire. There was very little damage, but a lot of excitement!

In April 1992 during a worship service, a powerful feeling of God's presence descended on our congregation as the choir sang "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." When the anthem ended, Pastor Gene Watterson said that nothing could be added, so he gave the invitation instead of preaching.

Ned Bost sat in the balcony where he had a good view of the choir. He always watched to see who slept through the sermon. Once when Ned went to his barber, Lewis Cantrell, a member of the choir, he told Lewis "You need a seat belt some Sundays to avoid falling out of your chair."

When Bob retired as Music Minister of First Baptist, he and Jackie continued as church members, but waited a while before joining the choir out of deference to his successor. Through the years, he has served the church by taking charge of church vehicles, including the bus, seeing that they are properly maintained, and driving them when asked to do so. He and Jackie continue to be valued members of the church.

Emily Monroe and Jeri Ledford

During his time as Music Minister in Shelby, he directed the Sanctuary Choir and its offshoots (mixed ensemble and women's ensemble), the Senior Choir, and the Singles Choir. He supervised the children's and youth choirs and several adult and youth handbell choirs. He started a church orchestra in the late 1980's. All choirs participated in the annual state music festivals, and the children and youth attended music camp at Caswell every year. The children, youth, and adults presented separate musicals every year, and they also cooperated with other churches in presenting musicals. Youth Choir and other youth took mission trips to White Hall, NY, Alexandria, VA, and New Orleans, LA. North Shelby School for handicapped children was provided with music leaders along with Sunday School teachers from the 1970's to the 1990's while Gene Allen was its principal.

Numerous directors and accompanists helped Bob with the music. Connie Hodge, Billy Summers, and Helen Gilliatt served as organist in Bob's early years. Jeri Ledford has been organist for 25 years, and Emily Monroe has been pianist for 15 years. Both of them grew up in the church. Melba McWhirter was director of the Children's Choir for 35 years.

In 1997, First Baptist celebrated 150 years of service to the Lord. Mark Cabaniss, a former member who grew up in the church, directed his "Anthem of Faithfulness," which he composed especially for the occasion. He has become well known in the music world.

It was while Bob was Music Minister that the church acquired handbells, the carillon bells, and a set of timpani.

Melba McWhirter: We took children to Caswell one year, and got the word somehow that some of them were planning to sneak out after everyone went to bed. Bob Dills and I rigged up ropes at every door and window and the escape plan was thwarted. We took the children camping, and they liked to ride the golf cart with "Papa Bob." Our family gave the church a set of handbells and others have been added by the Jewel and J. L. Wilkie families. The 19 programmable carillon bells were given by the Blanton and Austell families.

Lois Leath: Once, when the choir was singing the Hallelujah Chorus, my eight year old son stood up and shouted "Hallelujah!"

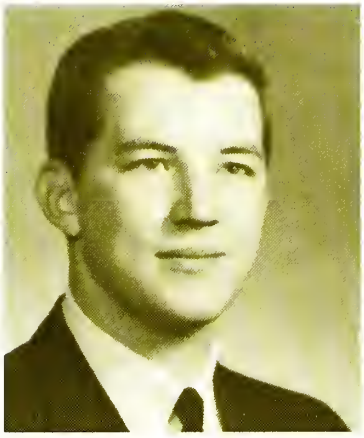
Janet Leath Martin: My father, Roland Leath and Lloyd Bost referred to each other as "Beloved." When Lloyd didn't care for the music my father had picked out for the choir, he would say, "Beloved, have you paid for this music yet?"

Ministers of Youth

There was a time when First Baptist Church was large and our staff was small. When Roland Leath joined the staff in 1950, he was expected to do what his predecessors in his position had done. The congregation soon realized he was multi-talented and very capable. One of his many duties was to plan and execute a

program for the young people of the church.

By 1956 it was apparent that more staff was needed. Jimmy Sides became the first youth minister, followed by Carol Pearson in 1960, Mel Daughty in 1967, and Richard Tate in 1972.



Mel Doughty

Glenn Davenport (1974-1997)

Glenn Davenport became youth minister in 1974. He served in that capacity until 1993 and then served as adult minister until 1997, a total of 23 years.

As youth and activities minister, Glenn started a multitude of programs and activities for young people and adults, some of which were designed for a short duration and others continued for years. He led at least one youth camp each year, as his predecessors had. He also started a Campers Club, a puppet ministry, a Fun Club, a Weight Masters group, a ceramics class, flag football, roller skating nights, basketball, softball, volley ball, swimming, ice skating, Bible study, lock-in fun nights, retreats, hiking the Appalachian Trail, lunch for International students, men's exercise class, fun trips for seniors, fun trips for young people, mission trips, trips to big league baseball games, rafting trips, scavenger parties, Putt-Putt tournaments, Olympics for grade school kids, ski trips, and Bible classes for college students.

Glenn Davenport

Glenn's interests gradually shifted more and more away from young people and toward adults. He officially became minister of adults and activities in 1993 and continued in that capacity until he left the church in 1997.

Glenn Davenport: I remember that in the 1980's I took our young people to Whitehall, NY, to help with Vacation Bible School, and two mission trips to New Orleans where the young people helped with Vacation Bible School and also did some home repairs.

Susan Grose: Growing up in this church, I remember Roland Leath and Singspiration. Old and young gathered in the area where the Weekday Ministries is now located and sang choruses. It was fun.

Mel Daughty organized the King's Players. We took three carloads of us to Glorietta and presented the play "Everyman." I don't remember what it was about, but it involved a casket.

Richard Tate had us working with other churches to produce Kairos, an evangelistic crusade, which brought thousands of people to the high school stadium.

Glenn Davenport took us to camp at Lurecrest where we had a guest minister. One night we threw sticks in the fire as symbols of giving up our sins. Another night we wore masks and took them off as symbols of our becoming a new creature in Christ. On the last night we wrote our sins on a paper and nailed it to a cross.

Peter West took us to Myrtle Beach. He helped us with Bible study in homes. At the end of Glenn Davenport's time with the youth and before Peter came, there was a period when some of us parents were doing the youth program. Peter gave a boost to our programs when he came.

Eric Shamblin came after Peter and the transition was difficult. He had a sweet spirit and tried to win kids in the neighborhood of the church by playing basketball with them.

Van Ramsey organized us into "Singout" and took us to Russia, Paris, and England. He also took us to Cali-

fornia, and we sang in churches all along the way.

Lisa McDowell: Glenn Davenport took us on mission trips to New York and West Virginia where we helped build a church and conducted Bible schools. The puppet ministry was a good way to tell the story of Jesus. Something was going on in the gym every day. Church was the place to be. We rotated between camp at Ridgecrest and at Caswell, and both gave us and a thousand other kids revival experiences.

Harold Causby: We took some young people to the Baptist Youth Congress in Switzerland with Mel Daughty. Mary Lou and I had a wonderful experience there. I broke my glasses and took them to an optometrist to have them fixed. We struck up a conversation with him and ended up inviting him and his wife to dinner. Again we had dinner with them and invited them to hear Billy Graham preach. We were so pleased when he answered the call to become a Christian.

Becky Hamrick: I went to Jamaica with Peter West and the young people. We were working with concrete and putting a second floor on a church. We slept on the floor of the church at night. We had water to mix our cement and to wash with only during certain hours. The Jamaicans bathed in the water naked. Peter's leadership there truly impressed me.

Skip Warrick: We went on a mission trip to New England in the 1970's. We ate doughnuts and orange juice for breakfast. Wooster, Massachusetts, turned out to be a very dangerous place. The church was in a bad neighborhood, on the extreme side for those days. We heard noises one night across from the church and found out later that the police were there for a shooting of some type. We were not allowed to go outside of the church where we were living once we were inside. We would leave out for

Peter West (1993-1996)

Peter West

Peter West became youth minister in 1993 at a time when the youth of the church needed new programs. He energized the youth program and was very popular with the young people.

In the mid nineties Peter West worked with the youth with a full program of projects as well as summer missions. The first of these mission trips was a venture in 1995 to Buffalo, New York.

Then in 1996 he directed a very successful trip to an area in the mountains close to Montego Bay in Jamaica. The work project on this trip centered on starting the building of a second floor on the little church. It was hard work even carrying supplies for concrete up to the roof. The neighborhood people were very friendly and receptive and wonderful partners in the work. The young people on these trips truly experienced the different cultures of these two places.

Summer Camp in 1994 was at Panama Beach, Florida. Peter promoted a "True Love Waits" rally for the First Baptist Church. This rally was held in the Shelby High School Auditorium. In 1994 he also promoted "Project Graduation" which was an alcohol, tobacco, weapons, and other drug free celebration. This was another program which promoted Christian Discipleship.

Peter resigned on September 22, 1996.

Eric Shamblin succeeded him in 1997 and served until 1998. Carol Ann Hoard became minister of youth and activities in 1998 and is still serving as of 2007.

Additional Staff

Ken Crawley

Ken Crawley was part-time business manager from 1976 until 1980. The responsibilities of this position included oversight of building maintenance, purchasing, and budget preparation. During Crawley's tenure he instituted a purchase order system, service contract on major

equipment, mailing of offering envelopes to all members, and began publishing new member photos in the *Informer*. A full-time business manager, Archie Mathis, was not hired until shortly before Dr. Watterson retired and he served 1996-2000.

Joe Blanton

Joseph Blanton, a former member of the New York City Opera, was named artist in residence at First Baptist Church in 1988. This is the first such position at a Baptist church in North Carolina.

Joe Blanton

A Shelby native, Blanton, 53, was a tenor who gave many sacred concerts in the area over the years.

The artist in residence was an unpaid position but Joe had the privilege to teach voice lessons and give concerts through North Carolina.

Secretaries

Mary Sue Thompson

Mary Sue Thompson succeeded Beverly Hamrick as church secretary at First Baptist Church. She held the job for 32 years, from 1947 to 1978. She started when Dr. Zeno Wall was pastor and served pastors Harlan Harris, John Lawrence, Dr. Joe McClain, and Dr. Gene Watterson. John and Laura Lawrence were very special to her and she kept up with them for years.

Ginny Spears

Ginny Spears was Education Secretary at First Baptist Church for 12 years, from 1963 to 1975. She worked for Roland Leath most of that time and for Bob Riddle briefly. The church bought its first electric typewriter for her use. She also used an addressograph and a mimeograph machine for copying. The machines were located in such cold rooms that they sometimes would not work. She remembers the day when she went to work and Dr. Joe McClain's keys were on her desk. Nobody knew he was resigning.

the day trips by bus to do our singing and return to the church. Wow, that was a long time ago but those images stick in my mind. Some might have been scare tactics and, if so, it sure worked. However, we got to see our new church organ being made on our way home.

That Jamaica trip was a blast. We slept on the church floor, listened to funeral drums beat at night, worked all day in the hot sun, and took a bath in the creek with the Jamaicans. The Jamaicans were naked, we were not. The girls in our group enjoyed taking care of the little Jamaican babies.

Susan Beam: Glenn Davenport used to have a week long day camp for children. They played games and made crafts. The kids roller skated in the gym. The gym was a Mecca for birthday parties. G.A. coronations were a big deal. The girls wore white dresses and were honored for their accomplishments. Mrs. Sarah Wray took us places and taught in many ways. I remember when we had so many Mission Friends that there were not enough high chairs for Wednesday night supper. Tammy Taylor and I would take the children's choir to my house in two church vans so they could ride the pony. We had a puppet ministry that would perform during services. The McWhirters had great campfires and hayrides.

Don and Harriett Wilson: Both the boys and girls had softball teams, along with an R.A. team. The Boy Scouts were very active and drew kids from the community. Jack Ramsey built them a hut where the child care center playground is now located.

Harlan Hamrick was a ham radio operator and a Sunday school teacher. He would set up his radio on the third floor of the education building, and the kids would talk to people all over the world.

The kids called Roland Leath "Rocking Roland" when he jazzed up his piano playing.

Staff– Seated, left to right, Miss Linda L. Pett, Mrs. James B Spears, Miss Mary Sue Thompson. Standing, Moroe Petty, Mrs. Rosie Lee Moore, Rellie McDowell, and Mrs. L.P. Williams

Baptist Training Union

Baptist Young People's Union (B.Y.P.U.) was started at First Baptist Church in 1912 by E. A. Ruppe, the church's first paid education director. The program was so successful among the young people that the name was changed to Baptist Training Union (B.T.U.) in 1935* and included adults.

*Date for BTU changed here to reflect research done in 2007. Inquiry to LifeWay Church Resources gave this date rather than the 1929 date used in "A History of First Baptist Church" (1969).

B.T.U. met every Sunday evening before the evening worship service. It was a time for fun as well as for training. When Roland Leath came in 1950 as education minister, he started Singspiration that preceded B.T.U.

People of every age would gather in the church basement where the child care center is now located, eat sandwiches, and sing campfire-type fun songs about Jesus. Then they would go to their Training Union groups.

Training Union used quarterlies from the Southern Baptist Convention's Sunday School Board. Each Training Union was divided into groups. When a group had the program a member was assigned a part of the printed matter to deliver, which trained young and old to speak in public about their Christian beliefs.

The Training Union was organized into groups according to age. Friendships were made that still go on in 2007. Many of those young people and young adults that were trained in B.T.U. have since served as leaders of the church in various capacities.

Mary Lou Davis: When I was a child you didn't ask, "Are we going to church today?" No, in our house if you could get out of bed on Sunday morning, you got ready to go to church to study the Bible and worship the Lord AND you came back on Sunday evening for BYPU!

Evelyn West: I was a member of that Training Union group when the doctor ordered me to bed in a vain effort to avoid a miscarriage. The Golden Band kept us supplied with food for several weeks.

Polly Willis Causby: Training Union created lifelong friendships.

B.T.U. included several departments for each age group, and every department included several Training Union groups. In 1963 the First Baptist Church Training Union was one of the largest in the state. When Gene Watterson came as pastor in 1969, Training Union enrollment was 545 (fifth largest in the state), and attendance varied from about 225 to over 300.

By 1979 Shelby had changed, and so had First Baptist Church. The church was no longer the social center that it had been, probably due to competition from television, movies, sports, etc. Sunday evening attendance fell off dramatically, and BTU became smaller. Average attendance was between 75 and 150. By 1984 Minister of Education Billy Cooper had started various discipleship training programs more specifically aimed at members working in the church. BTU faded from the scene about then as Baptists across the country looked to new strategies for discipling believers.

The last two directors of BTU were George Magness, who died fighting a fire in 1979, and David Causby, who presided over the transition from BTU to Church Training.

The purpose of Baptist Training Union was to "train church members in the Christian life, to acquaint them with their heritage, and prepare them for church leadership roles" (Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, p. 647). As BTU passed off the scene, the Baptist Sunday School Board attempted to encourage the execution of its original goals by changing the name of the Sunday evening training to Church Training and later Discipleship Training. The training did not involve as many people as in the heyday of BTU, but it was much more intensive and was quite often directed at a particular need in the lives of growing disciples. Sessions took place at the church or in private homes. Some were scheduled on Sunday evenings, but many occurred on weekdays and evenings. This scheduling pattern continues to the present time.

Some of the most helpful and widespread discipleship training resources utilized at First Baptist Church have been *MasterLife* (written by Avery T. Willis and originating on the Indonesian mission field and published in 1980), *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (written by Henry Blackaby and Claude King and published in 1990), Beth Moore Bible Studies, and courses on parenting, marriage, finance, prayer, etc. In more recent years, Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* has been used to encourage many churches, including this First Baptist Church, to encourage members to live lives of faith in

The training it provided was replaced by discipleship training, which was more in depth. I think the Ed Sullivan program on Sunday evening television helped kill it off as well. I remember when our Training Union vigorously discussed the "God is dead" movement that came along in the '50's.

Rachel Magness Arndt: John Ed and Essie Davis started the Honey Bees Training Union. We learned a lot and had a lot of fun together. I remember once when my husband George was director that we had to make sandwiches for Singspiration and that was a job! I remember too when George and I were invited to a party for another Training Union that was enjoying a fish fry at the Best home. I have learned since that Margaret Best both caught and cooked fish quite often.

J. A. West: Our Training Union had a party up in the mountains. The adults were sitting in a big circle and the children were playing on the floor inside the circle. One of the kids choked and threw up. Jean Eskridge threw a towel on the mess and never stopped talking.

Janice Boyles: I was a member of the Golden Band Training Union, started by Lois Leath for young couples. We had about 35 members divided into four groups. We really enjoyed Singspiration and each other. At the same time we learned how to present a religious program. Our Training Tnion group started having Sunday lunch together and called ourselves the Sunday Lunch Bunch. One time our Training Union group went to Staley's in Charlotte. We were having such a good time that an inebriated customer asked Roland Leath what we were drinking. Roland told him our good time didn't come out of a bottle, and the next morning we would still be happy. About a dozen of us still meet and eat once a month, and it all started in 1950 with the Training Union.

response to these five purposes:

I was planned for God's pleasure (worship), so I will use this day to get to know and love God better.

I was formed for God's family (fellowship), so I will use this day to show love to other believers.

I was created to become like Christ (discipleship), so I will use this day to make choices that grow my character.

I was shaped to serve God (ministry), so I will use this day to serve God by serving others.

I was made for a mission (evangelism), so I will use this day to share the Good News. (Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*)

Church ministers have conducted many of the discipleship training sessions, but others have been led by dedicated Bible teachers and facilitators within the membership of First Baptist Church as enlisted by the church's Discipleship Training Director. Several church members have served faithfully in this capacity since 1996 including Frank Garver, Betty Kendrick, Camille Van Horn, Teralea Moore, Joan Flowers, Lynn Moss, and Dawn Anthony.

Junior Church and the Bus Ministry

In 1973 Rev. Watterson asked Helen Gilliatt and David Ellis to start Junior Church for the children in the neighborhoods near our church. At the same time the church purchased two old school buses to be used in conjunction with Junior Church.

Each Saturday Fred Swift, Bill Wilder, and Bill Lutz drove the buses into nearby trailer parks and poorer neighborhoods. They knocked on doors and invited children to come to Junior Church the next day. Sunday morning they drove the busses into the same neighborhoods and picked up any children who wanted to come. After Junior Church, they carried the children back home.

Junior Church started out in Webb Chapel and later moved to the third floor auditorium in the same building. Helen Gilliatt led the services, assisted by four W.M.U. ladies and two deacons. Sedalia Kester played the piano.

A typical Junior Church service involved singing (and sometimes acting out) contemporary songs that children enjoyed. Rev. Watterson would deliver an informal sermon and invite the children to accept Jesus as their personal savior. The adults present would talk to the children individually. Some of the children were involved in impromptu skits. Helen Gilliatt did monologues as if she were a character in the Bible. The kids were taught Bible verses. The pre-school children met separately, sang songs, played games, and heard Bible stories.

At first, the program attracted good crowds. They would have as many as 100 children some days. Some kids accepted Christ and were baptized in the pool at City Park since our baptismal pool was under construction. After a couple of years the crowds dwindled away, the Program was ended, and the old buses were sold.

37 to Save One

The church newsletter reported that an 11 year old boy joined the church on a profession of faith. The pastor asked that all who had participated in his spiritual instruction to come and stand with the boy. Thirty-seven adults joined him.

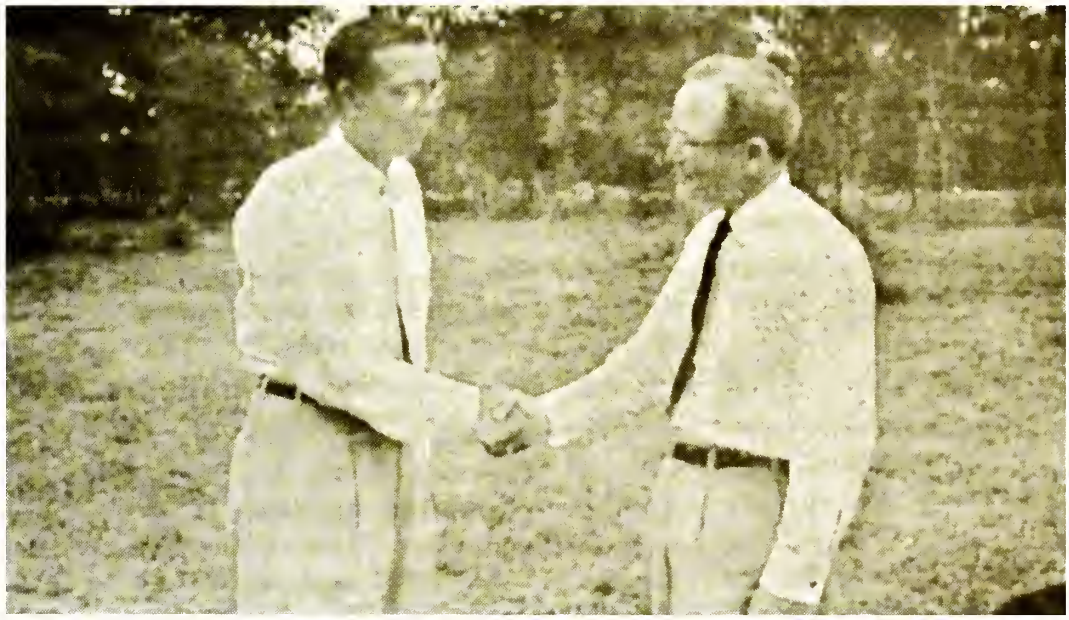
Revive Us Again

From the earliest days of First Baptist Church until the late 1990's, the church sponsored revival meetings. The purpose of a revival was to get members to rededicate their lives to the work of the Lord and to get non-Christians to accept Jesus as their personal savior.

Ed Spangler remembers a tent revival in the late 1920's. The tent was set up next to the church where the old educational building is now located. Ed accepted the Lord and then joined First Baptist where Dr. Zeno Wall was the pastor and where his family were members.

J. A. West remembers a Laymen's Revival in the early 1950's. The laymen who came were from the mountains of North Carolina. They were uneducated, but they knew that Jesus was very real. Their personal testimonies resulted in many rededications and professions of faith.

Carlos Young remembers in 1958 Dr. Baker James Cauthen, Executive Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, was invited to speak to the church on a Wednesday night. That night the church was packed and 179 chairs were brought in. When the invitation was given, 92 young people responded, some to volunteer for full-time Christian service and some to rededicate their lives.



Carlos Young welcomes Baker James Cauthen to First Baptist.

For many, many years First Baptist Church had two revivals a year, spring and fall, and the church spent weeks getting ready for each revival.

Members gave their personal testimonies in their Sunday School classes and in the worship services leading up to the revival. Cottage prayer meetings occurred all over Shelby in member's homes. In those meetings a devotional was given and the group prayed for revival. A church census might be taken of the entire city to pinpoint the unchurched and unsaved. Prospects were assigned to members and visited and invited to the revival.

To insure a good crowd, pews were assigned to members to be filled by them with family, friends, neighbors, and prospective members. Another night, Sunday School teachers became pew captains. Another night that duty fell to the deacons, or the

Hoyle Davis: In 1965 Dr. Forrest Feezor was serving as interim between John Lawrence and Dr. McClain and was conducting a revival at First Baptist. Dr. Feezor said he had a dream that the sanctuary would be full on Monday evening, even though that would normally be a slow night in a revival. But Monday night the place was full!

These are the ways the small groups lived out their faith during 40 Days of Community:

Reaching Out Together

Be wise in the way you act with people who are not believers, making the most of every opportunity.
Colossians 4:5 (NCV)

1. 6th Grade SS – stuffed candy bags for Hospice
2. Snacks for the ICU at CRMC
3. Marion School Weekend Nutrition Back Packs
4. Made Cakes for Hospice.
5. Remodeled Shelby Child Advocate Center
6. Assisted Pregnancy Resource Center
7. Gave supplies for Dr. Hayek's Nicaraguan Mission trip
8 Helped single Mom with disabled child
9. Care for disabled student at Marion with spina bifida
10. Supply provision for Marion School partnership
11. Care packages for Iraq
12. Visually Handicapped Lunch
13. After School tutoring snacks at Marion
14. Helped a grandmother rearing five children
15. Help for a deaf child at Marion
16. Visit the "no one visits" folks at Century Care
17. Support with money and labor at Crossroads Rescue Mission
18. Breakfast at the Homeless Shelter
19. Assisted man from Haiti
20. APC sponsorship of a homeless person
21. Uniforms for SMS students who need the help – $1200
22. Ongoing ministry to family in Upper Cleveland
23. Adopt a child in India
24. Cook-out for Marion School Atbrotherhood, or the W.M.U., or other volunteers.

There was always a visiting preacher and a visiting song leader. The preacher was one known for his evangelistic sermons. The song leader came from a church that was noted for its music. The usual and preferred type of sermon was of the hell fire and brimstone variety, delivered with a lot of emotion. The singing dovetailed with the sermons.

The preacher's final invitation was often emotional and protracted. It occurred before the closing hymn and sometimes even during the closing hymn. During the closing hymn, many Christians present rededicated their lives. Some talked to a lost friend or relative during the invitation and accompanied that person to the front if they accepted Jesus. The invitation continued on and on as long as more came to rededicate or to profess their faith.

The revival started on Sunday morning, continued on Sunday night, and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights. In the earlier days it lasted all week. After one week of revival, Dr. Watterson decided we needed another week, so it continued.

First Baptist often cooperated with other churches in community revivals. Harlan Harris brought his friend Billy Graham to preach at the Shelby armory. Evangelists James Roberson and Clyde Duplin filled Shelby High School stadium. (Evangelist Bill Glass once led a Crusade for Christ at Gardner-Webb College.)

The deaf class at First Baptist has sponsored a revival from time to time. They invite preachers and song leaders who know sign language. Sometimes the visiting preacher and song leader would conduct some of the deaf revival for the benefit of the whole congregation. The preacher preaches and signs at the same time. The song leader sings and signs as he conducts the music. The deaf class would often comprise a signing choir during the services.

On at least one occasion the fall revival was conducted by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

The young people of the church went to camp at Ridgecrest, Caraway, and Caswell, and elsewhere from time to time. Often their evening "camp fires," especially the last one of the week, became evangelistic and emotional, carrying forth the "revival fires" into the hearts of the campers.

In many churches, revivals became a thing of the past. Some people were glad to see them go, but others even now yearn for a "good old-fashioned revival."

Revive Us Some More

In most recent years the revival emphasis has taken on different forms. For example, in 1999 Dr. Robert Canoy preached and taught to commitment for several nights that were called "Four Days for Our Future." The first of these services followed the theme "Who Wants to Be a REAL Church?" patterned after the then popular television game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?"

In October of 2000, Jeff Smith of "Salt and Light Ministries" brought his creative ministry presentations to First Baptist to lead a week entitled "In God's Presence: Fall Focus on Prayer." During this week, Smith came "in character" to lead the church to consider our walk of faith with the Lord and how it is possible to keep the conversation of prayer alive and on-going. Church members led the Sunday morning and evening services with their own dramatic offerings and then Smith completed the leadership of the week Monday through Wednesday. The services were extremely interactive with our young people coming early to work with him to learn the "stick-sign" presentation of the song *Arise My Love* depicting the death and resurrection of Jesus.

FBC members celebrate 40 Days of Purpose, *2004.*

The spring of 2004 brought the *40 Days of Purpose* campaign to First Baptist Church. This seven-week emphasis brought the congregation together around a common daily reading from Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life*. The purposes taught in the book were introduced by way of simulcast video message by Warren from the Saddleback Community Church in San Diego, CA. Then on each of the successive weeks the purpose themes were the focus of Pastor Tench's preaching, the Sunday School teachers teaching, and were highlighted by way of a video curriculum used by 69 small groups meeting throughout the week including 11 small

Risk kids and families

25. Groceries for Cleveland County AIDS patients
26. Good News Mug given to encourage one struggling with alcohol
27. Good News Mug given in a relationship struggle and with tears
28. Good News Mug given to neighbor in tears because of the care of neighbor

Belonging Together

Since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. Romans 12:5b (NLT)

29. Parents Night Out Childcare Provision
30. Project assistance for Child Care Center
31. Encouraged our young people who needed assistance
32. Staff Encouragement
33. Honored our TV Tech Crew
34. Meals of encouragement to our members
35. Good News Mug given to a person to help resolve interpersonal conflict

Growing Together

Encourage one another and build each other up. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

36. Purchased gift Bibles for our WDM Graduation
37. Involved our children in visits to nursing homes
38. FCA camp scholarships

Serving Together

By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2 (NCV)

39. Food to Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association Food pantry
40. Youth windshield washing
41. "Sunshine Baskets" to shut-ins
42. Dental Care provision for a child
43. Care for family dealing with ALS
44. Celebration supper inviting those

who lost spouse in last 2 years
45. Served the Wednesday night fellowship
46. Cut shrubbery for two widows
47. Refinished furniture for Singles ministry

Worshiping Together

You have six days to do your work, but the seventh day of each week is holy because it belongs to me.
Leviticus 23:3a (CEV)

48. Communion for residents at Assisted Living Centers
49. Feed-the-Hungry worship experience on Good Friday
50. Good News Mug to tell of God's love – Given away on a cruise ship to the room steward from the Philippines – "who had been thinking of changing to the belief in Jesus." The ship's name – Majesty!

groups of youth.

In 2006 Dr. Tony Campolo, world renowned author, preacher, and professor of sociology at Eastern University in St. Davids, PA, preached a series of services on the theme "The Church: God's Agenda for the World." Many Christian brothers and sisters from other local congregations joined the First Baptist family during this focus.

With the approach of 2007 the Church Mission Council recommended another 40 day focus. The spring of that year found the church engaged in the *40 Days of Community* campaign as a follow-up to the previous emphasis from the Saddleback congregation. Using the same multi-approach format for teaching the material as employed in 2004, the common reading of *Better Together: What on Earth Are WE Here For?* by Rick Warren led the congregation to remember the five purposes of a believer's life and to strategize together how to live them out in the community of Shelby and Cleveland County. Over the course of these seven weeks 37 small groups meeting throughout the week, along with all of the Sunday School classes, discovered ways God would use them to reach out to others with his love.

Thus, revival is still taking place at First Baptist Church in Shelby!

Pledges

For many years members of First Baptist Church were asked to sign a written pledge as to how much they would give to the church during the year.

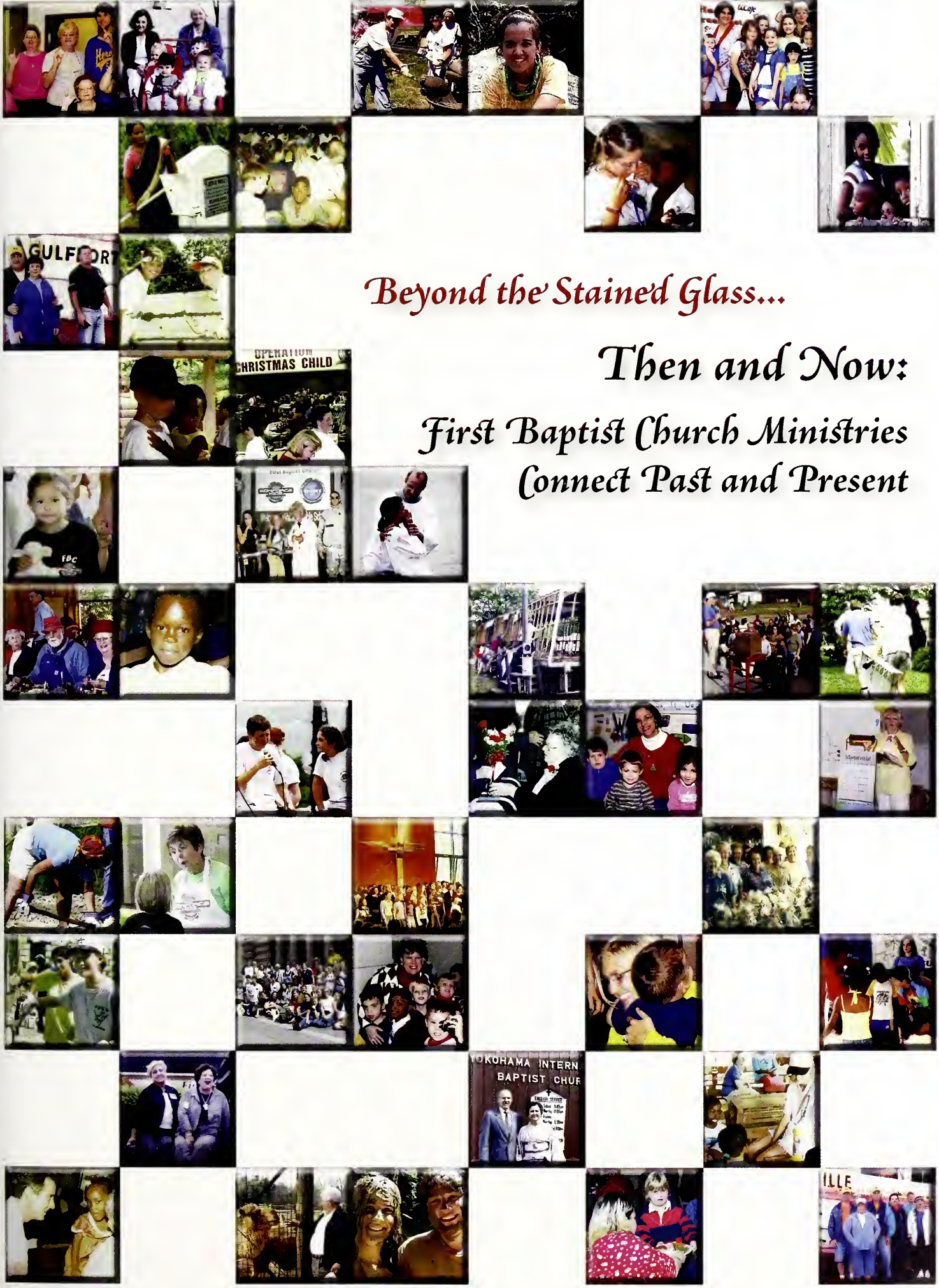
For example, in 1972 over a period of two months, members gave their personal testimonies about tithing in church services, Sunday school classes, and in the church newsletter. Every member was contacted personally and given a pledge card. On Pledge Sunday the deacons sat together as did the Sunday school classes and departments. At the conclusion of the worship service each group went to the front of the auditorium and placed their pledge cards on the table.

In 1976 everyone was sent a pledge card. On Pledge Sunday the deacons and church council led the way as members put their cards on the table at the front of the auditorium.

In 1987 pledging was promoted throughout the fall months in Sunday School, church, and the *Informer*. Personal testimonies were given in church and Sunday School after which pledges were received. If members failed to turn in a pledge card, they were visited. A concerted effort was made to encourage all members to pledge.

Pledge cards have not been used since Gene Watterson retired.

When the church body votes to approve the budget, they are in essence saying that members will give their tithes and offerings in order to adequately meet the budget. The church is following God's plan for giving in the spirit of love.



Beyond the Stained Glass...

Then and Now:

First Baptist Church Ministries Connect Past and Present

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Our Baptist Beliefs Move Us To Ministry

As the Baptists of Shelby were organizing their first church in town in 1847, the Southern Baptist Convention was a mere two years old. Having been formed in Augusta, Georgia, in 1845, the SBC had missions and ministry as its focus. The sectionalism that divided the United States over issues of slavery made for a climate of division that impacted all major protestant denominations along the Mason-Dixon Line. Baptists in the South, therefore, organized themselves for ministry and missions separate from their brothers and sisters in the North. Even so, the foundation of their Baptist theology was not a separate matter. From the outset of their theological development, Baptists have held to certain common beliefs and distinctives.

Rev. Tench baptizes Shannon Page

At the heart of Baptist theology is an indebtedness to centuries of spiritual heritage and theological reflection by way of the journey of the church since the time of Jesus. The Apostles Creed, for example, dates back to AD 340 and, while coming along long before the inception of the Baptist movement in 17th century England, reflects the ancient faith heritage to which Baptists hold:

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

Through the years Baptists have written down their own expressions of belief into documents known as "confessions of faith." These confessions have been succinct declarations of doctrine and have taken various forms – some have lived as "confessions," i.e. stating the common beliefs of the people of the group – others have lived as "creeds," i.e. requiring affirmation for membership in the group. Here we offer a brief look at the distinctives of Baptist thought and practice that have given definition to Baptist identity across our varied expressions. Try this acrostic as a description of what it means to be "**B-A-P-T-I-S-T**:"

Bible as authority for faith and practice. Like the stained glass windows that welcome worshipers into the First Baptist Sanctuary, the Bible is held by Baptists as the lamp unto our feet and a light for our path.

Autonomy of the local church. Each level of Baptist life is autonomous in its decision making. The Association, the State Conventions and Fellowships, and the National Denominational bodies are all autonomous in their organizations with the local church being the building block in each one as congregations cooperate together for missions and ministry. The local Baptist church makes its own decisions based upon the leadership of the Lord Jesus in their lives. He is the "head" of the church.

Teri Carpenter and son Zack Bason sharing the good news in Trinadad

Priesthood of the believer. Baptists, following Martin Luther's interpretation of scripture, have recognized that every believer is able to seek the grace and audience of God himself without

an intermediary. In this regard, every believer has been set apart by God to serve him and to participate in the leadership of the church by way of a continuous, open conversation with Him through prayer.

Telling others about Jesus. Baptists are an "evangelical" people because we believe that the Great Commission was Jesus' way of sending us into the world to "tell the good news" of God's love and grace through His Son. Baptists, therefore, keep evangelism and missions at the forefront of our life together.

Baptizing at Moss Lake– Barry Self

Immersion as the mode of Believer's Baptism. In the New Testament, it is a believer in Jesus who is baptized ("dipped in water") as a testimony to the new life that is theirs through Christ. This baptism was done by dipping the new believer in water and for that reason Baptists continue to immerse as the mode for baptism. The primary focus, however, is on believer's baptism. Baptists watch to see a person make his own profession of faith in Jesus – acknowledging his sin and need for forgiveness and promising to follow Jesus as Lord. At such a "Profession" is a person baptized and not before.

Soul Competency of every individual. Baptists believe that every person can be trusted to act in religious matters without coercion by the state or by the church. God has made us with an inner ability to respond to biblical truth under His direction. This belief recognizes the role of the Holy Spirit as teacher for each individual and through each individual to others in the Body of Christ.

Torchbearer for religious liberty for all people of every religion. Because we Baptists were ourselves a persecuted people from our beginnings in 17th century England and in the early days of our movement in colonial Virginia, we have always stood for religious liberty for all people. Baptists in Virginia, in fact, gave influence to the process that led to the inclusion of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution securing religious liberty in our land.

This acrostic is a quick way to remember the foundations of our Baptist identity "then" – for the first 160 years of our life as First Baptist Church – and "now" as we press ahead into missions and ministry in the 21st century.

J. A. West: Evelyn and I had just married when we moved to Shelby and joined First Baptist Church in 1950. I had been a Baptist all my life, and Evelyn had been a Disciple of Christ all her life. So when First Baptist Church offered a course in What Baptists Believe, we took it. Most of the class discussion was between Evelyn and me. One of the ladies taking the course asked if we got along with each other at home! We've been getting along with each other at home for 57 years now.

These distinctives, however, are not ends in themselves. Rather they are meant to encourage our congregations to follow faithfully our Lord. Pastor Tony Tench reminds us, "The heritage of Baptist beliefs did not grow out of one theology or doctrinal tradition, but from many! Thus we are thankful for the Christian traditions of our brothers and sisters in Christ in all denominations even as we celebrate our distinctively Baptist expressions." He quotes Baptist church historian, Walter Shurden: "For me...to be a Christian is to take seriously what Jesus took seriously. And what Jesus took seriously was not believer's baptism by immersion, congregational church government, the priesthood of all believers, and the symbolic view of the ordinances. What Jesus took seriously was healing human hearts, confronting the exploiters, defending the defenseless, living a life anchored in and under God, and being radically obedient to God. It is much easier to be a Baptist than it is to take Jesus seriously." Even so, from the formation of our shared theological grounding with other Christian denominations and our Baptist distinctives, the believers of First Baptist Church continue to encourage one another to "take Jesus seriously."

FBC and Other Baptists

Dr. Zeno Wall (pastor 1925 – 1948) was president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1936. He was president of Boiling Springs Junior College (now Gardner-Webb University) for two years.

Dr. Forrest Feezor (interim pastor 1964 – 1965) was president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in 1942.

Rev. John Lawrence (pastor 1954 – 1964) was president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in 1970 and 1971. Carlos Young served as a vice-president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention during John Lawrence's term as president.

Dr. Gene Watterson (pastor 1969 – 1995) was president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in 1990 and 1991.

The late 1940's found service men returning from World War II, getting married, having children, and flocking to the churches. Race riots and the Vietnam War with attendant violence and demonstrations came in the 1960's, and the "God is dead!" idea was rampant. The turmoil of the 1960's resulted in a religious backlash among Baptists.

In 1979 a new movement within the Southern Baptist Convention began that would impact the cooperation of our nation's largest protestant denomination. Church historian Bill Leonard writes that in this year "a controversy emerged that undermined not only organizational but also personal relationships across the convention. In that year, a fundamentalist faction implemented certain political methods as a means of dominating the denominational structure. In response, a moderate faction took shape whose members were united less by a uniform theological position than by their opposition to the political maneuvers of the fundamentalists. The struggle between these two groups has led to the politicization and ultimate polarization of almost every segment of convention life" (Bill J. Leonard, *God's Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention*, p.x.). The result of the self-styled "Conservative resurgence" (see Paul Pressler, *A Hill on Which to Die: One Southern Baptist's View*, p. 275) was that convention employees were expected to endorse a specific conservative theological perspective. This theological perspective, represented by the revised *Baptist Faith and Message* confession of faith, became a standard employment instrument for convention employees resulting in the loss of jobs for seminary professors and missionaries alike.

In reaction to a decade of public controversy, a loose organization was formed in August of 1990 in

Atlanta to explore ways for moderate Baptists to continue to fellowship together outside the SBC framework. This action led to the inaugural General Assembly in 1991 of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Today, both the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship are ministry and missions networks with which First Baptist Church partners for the proclamation of the Gospel locally, nationally, and around the world.

Some members of First Baptist Church of Shelby decided early on that they were not in complete sympathy with what had happened in the Southern Baptist Convention. Members began to withhold a portion of their money that would normally have gone to the Cooperative Program. Eventually, the church agreed on a plan that permits each member to indicate whether his giving is to support the Southern Baptist Convention or the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Sunday School

Sunday School for Shelby Baptist Church (later First Baptist Church of Shelby) was organized in 1864 by G. M. Webb, son of J. M Webb, the church's first pastor. Even though the church was meeting for worship only one Sunday a month, Sunday School met every week and involved over 75 percent of the members

Sunday School attendance grew from 130 in 1880, to 350 in 1885, to 500 in 1910. A 1934 revival brought a peak Sunday School attendance of 1583. The polio epidemic of 1948 resulted in no Sunday School for August and September of that year.

Grading the Sunday School by age began in 1904 but has been carried out erratically. When the church's "new" education building was erected in 1954, Education Minister Roland Leath reorganized the Sunday School classes by age and grouped the ages into departments. Each department had an opening assembly before classes began, but opening assembly was abandoned in 1971 in most departments.

Grading by age had its problems. Some people refused to go in a classroom where the age was listed over the door, so those numbers came down. The idea was to promote each fall as members aged out of their class. Some promoted, many did not. Eventually, members became so attached to the other members of their class that they quit promoting altogether. In 2007 preschool, children, and youth continue to promote. Adult classes do not. In some of the older classes death has promoted so many to

Polly Causby: Our Sunday School class members served as secret sisters to First Baptist Church college freshmen. We sent them cards of encouragement and small gifts all through the year, and then revealed who his or her secret sister was at an annual banquet. Brenda Curtis' class sent cards of encouragement and prayed for law enforcement people. She taught AG students at Elizabeth Elementary School through the week and taught us AGED students on Sunday. Though our classes ignore their age designations these days, the women still normally identify their classes by age and the men identify theirs by the name of the teacher. For many years, Joe Wright provided substitute teachers where needed, and he also taught a class at the hospital.

Fred Flowers: On one Pastor Appreciation Day the George Byrd class provided Dr. Canoy and his wife with a white limousine that took them to Charlotte for a fine dinner. Johnny Lavender and I went on a mission trip to Honduras to help missionaries Larry and Jean Elliott. When we got back home, we got the George Byrd class to raise $8,000 for a used truck and equipment to aid Larry in his drilling of wells for the area he served. Mike Gammons tells me Larry and Jean died on the mission field in Iraq. Clara Angel taught a Sunday School class and managed the kitchen for the Wednesday night suppers. I told her that she must really be an angel. Her reply: "No, but I married one!"

Nancy Kennedy: Edith Hoffman has taught our class for ages, at least the 15 years I have been in it. She encourages us to be mission minded. At Christmas we will buy a heifer or some other animal from the Heifer Project for a needy family overseas. We send first aid packets to Thailand. We pray for cancer victims. Each Sunday we send a child a card signed by everyone

present telling them we are praying for them. I understand Fred Flowers' class does the same.

Evelyn West: Lois Leath taught an enormous class of women. She also taught the Sunday School teachers on Wednesday nights and provided them with an outline of Sunday's lesson. All the teachers taught the same lesson in those days. I think the Sunday School classes are the backbone of the church. They teach the Bible, provide fellowship, minister to each other's needs, and collect most of the money that the church takes in. We have lots of people who have taught many, many years, like George Byrd, Paul Wilson, and others. We hear about them, but we seldom hear about the many who have taught the kids for years, like Betty Lawing, Margaret Litton, Joyce Lee, Mrs. Yates, Becky Bingham and others.

Jim Horn: Mr. Byrd was my mentor from the time he was my Sunday school teacher when I was eight years old. I pray that I can have just a minute part of his faith and dedication to our Lord.

Eddie Holbrook: George was like a second father. He had the unique ability of understanding and discussing your problems, regardless of whether you were 30 years old or 60 years old and regardless of whether it was a spiritual, social, or financial problem. He was truly a man of God!

Linton Suttle: George cared for the members of his Sunday school class just like they were his own children.

Boyd Hendrick: Mr. Byrd will be remembered as one of the greatest teachers First Baptist Church has ever had.

Freddie Harrill: George Byrd kept his life so full of love and truth that there was little, if any, room for sin.

heaven that the classes have all but disappeared. Recently, several of those classes have combined. It seems that the Lord grades by age even if the church does not.

Sunday School attendance peaked after World War II but has declined ever since. As of 2007 attendance hovers at 400 to 500 and occasionally goes over the 500 mark. When periodic checks of Sunday School attendance are made, it is found that over any three month period, we have a non-duplicating attendance of nearly 750 different individuals.

Sunday School classes were asked to tell us about their teachers and their ministries. Some responded.

Deaf Class: Year around, we make sure our members have the necessities of life, help with their bills, and transportation to church and elsewhere. At various times the church has provided Bibles and Bible Dictionaries for the Deaf. We have had many Bible studies, some led by Martha Hamrick. We "adopted" a little girl at Marion School and help her as needed. In May and October of each year we go to Deaf Camp at Caraway, a North Carolina Baptist Assembly near Asheboro, NC.

Friendship Class: Ours is a couples class that started in 2003. We have collected items for the homeless shelter, provided bedding for a room at Christine's Home, provided needed items for students at Marion School, contributed cash for youth mission trips, and purchased an air conditioner for an elderly church member.

Love Class: We have provided Christmas gifts and food for needy families, supplied snacks for Team Kids, stuffed shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child, helped an international student at Gardner-Webb, and contributed to all church mission offerings, the Habitat House, two church members on mission trips, the Crossnore Orphanage, and the Children's Home.

Jackie Stone's Class: We provided candy for the Easter Egg Hunt, provided for needy listed on the Angel Tree at Christmas, helped with the Block Party, and provided necessities for the homeless shelter.

Lib Holleman's Class: We helped secure middle school uniforms, helped the Alliance Defense Fund, Share the Warmth Fund, Hospice, the South Mountain Christian Camps, pack a trunk for Malawi, a needy family, Bibles for the association, all the mission offerings, furnishings for Christine's Home, Katrina relief, Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross, the Belmont Mission, the Jesus Film, Welcome Baptist Church, Iraq food box,

refrigeration for Abuse Prevention Center, flood relief, Samaritan's Purse, and medicine for the needy.

Co-Ed 50 plus Sunday School: In 1986 Education Minister Billy Cooper decided First Baptist Church should have a class for all ages, sexes, colors, and backgrounds. He asked four couples to start such a class and they did so. Within four or five months the class grew to 25 or 30 people. Eventually, there were 93 members. As of 2007 there are 74 members. The class zealously keeps up with its members and provides needed prayer and financial support as well as physical assistance. Members give generously every Sunday and raise more money with auctions, yard sales, and class cook books. The money is used to assist members, to aid international students, to support a polio victim for 20 years, to pay off a loan so a cancer patient could die at home, to buy a used car for a woman who needed it to get to work, to buy a pain pump for Hospice, to help with utility, medical, and food bills, to help pay air fare for a man to go to a N.Y. clinic for treatment and other needs in our class or our church or our community. Members support all church offerings.

Iris Maloney teaches Sunday School class.

Senior Adult Men's Class: At one time three of our oldest men's classes had 25 or 30 members each. Death decimated all three classes to where they only had a very few in each class. In 2007 we combined the classes into one, and we still use all three teachers: Hale Bryson, Keith McGraw, and Frank Bonner. As the members of Dr. Bonner's class died off, Herman

Woody Kennedy's Sunday School class prepares for church picnic.

Leona Costner: Trisha Whatley was in my Sunday School class for two year olds. She kept talking about Santa Claus for months after Christmas had passed. I finally found out that she had gotten a kitten for Christmas and named it Santa Claus. She was talking about her kitten, not the "real" Santa Claus.

Patty Whatley: That cat got diabetes. When we picked up insulin at the drug store for Santa Claus Whatley, we got funny looks. Trisha took a fancy to a leopard skin design half-slip that she saw when we went to a yard sale, and it became her sleeping companion. I wouldn't let her take it to the church nursery, until her teachers begged me to do so – to stop Trisha's screaming! Jack Van Horn was in my Sunday School Kindergarten class, and all the kids were asked to make a coupon book on Father's Day saying how many times they would help Dad carry out the trash, weed the garden, etc. At first Jack refused to answer the questions. We finally shamed him into answering, but his answers were all zeroes! At Thanksgiving we had the kids putting together turkeys. One of them asked one of the other teachers what the red thing was under the turkey's neck. "It's the gobbler," she said. "No," said David Roby, "It's the waddle!" He was right of course.

J.A. West: Elbert and Leona Costner celebrated their 70th anniversary while Leona lay dying in the hospital. They had 58 years of perfect attendance at Sunday School and church. When they were out of town on Sunday, they found a local church and attended Sunday School and church. Elbert attended Sunday School and church the day Leona was buried. "I don't do it for the record," said Elbert. "I do it because I don't feel right unless I go to Sunday School and church on Sunday."

Living history memories of workers in children's Sunday School:

A six year old visitor was asked how she liked Sunday school. "The teacher has ruffles in her face just like my grandmother, and she smiles a lot."

The children were asked if they had any prayer requests. One little boy said "Me!" and immediately bowed his head and began praying aloud for himself.

Judy Hawkins was teaching the children that God provides them with things that are necessary. One child disputed that: "He gives us schools but they aren't necessary."

As Susan Evans changed the two year old's soiled clothes in the nursery, she talked to him about being clean inside and out. "You don't have on any gloves," he said. "Where are your gloves?"

Susan Evans gives Sunday School greeting

Best suggested we send contributions to the Christian Service Organization at Gardner-Webb University in lieu of flowers. We raised several thousand dollars that way to sponsor divinity students at Gardner-Webb. We would sit around and talk before Sunday School started. I remember Dr. John Hamrick saying that when his wife disapproved of something he said or did, she would play the piano. The more she disapproved the louder she played. Herman and Margaret Best taught Sunday School for 40 years each.

Woody Kennedy's Class: Every Christmas this class adopts three families, providing them with toys for the kids, food, and house repairs. They donated $2800 to purchase a bus for a pastor in Haiti. Skip Warrick and his cooking team have sponsored numerous fundraisers, usually for youth groups, cooking ribs, chicken, and barbecue. Woody Kennedy bakes cakes for such money raisers. The class is ready to do anything they can for the church.

The George Byrd Class: George Byrd was a deacon, Brotherhood president, chairman of building and grounds committee, etc. But he is most remembered as a fine human being and a Sunday School teacher for more than 60 years. Every group of men that was interviewed for the church history got around to singing his praises before they adjourned.

Singles Sunday School

The 2007 singles program at First Baptist Church is very different from the one started in 1978 when Dot Hicks and others joined forces with Education Minister Billy Cooper to reach out to singles. Their original goal was to serve widows and divorcees who were single again, but when they sought guidance from the state and national organizations they decided to broaden the program to include all singles in the community whether or not they belonged to First Baptist Church. They held a non-denominational county-wide conference on the subject that attracted 300 or more people.

The singles department had several classes and occupied the

entire top floor of what is known as the old education building. They engaged in Bible study, went on mission trips, and enjoyed monthly get-togethers attracting 150 to 200 people every time they met.

The department started in 1978 and disbanned in 1988 when Billy Cooper Minister of Education resigned and its volunteer leaders moved on to something else. Billy says such a program needs a professional leader, interested volunteers, and church encouragement and financial support, and that any church with such a program is bound to grow.

The Singles Ministry at First Baptist Church has changed and grown through the years. In the 1980's Jacky Stone was the teacher of the Singles Sunday School Class. A few years later, a Single Again Class was started for divorcees. Eventually, Ada Scism led a WDS-40 group (Widowed, Divorced, and Single over 40) which was purely a social group for church members and people from other churches. All three groups were successful from the beginning, and the two Sunday School classes are still successful.

The Singles Class met in the Chapel but moved to the carwash building in 1994. Then they switched to the weight room and then to the Dover Activities Building. In 2007 the weight room and other areas under the sanctuary were beautifully remodeled for the Singles, and the groups continue to prosper.

The church ministerial staff has provided leadership for the Singles and it has been blessed with volunteer teachers such as Jacky Stone, Dorothy and Tommy Young, Reggie and Jeri Ledford, and Dr. and Mrs. Bill Crouch.

In 2003 Reggie Ledford and others started Café Phoenix, a coffeehouse for singles. It has been very successful. Most new members of the Singles Classes come through the coffeehouse.

The singles enjoy each other. In fact, Reggie and Jeri Ledford met in the class and married. The group has monthly dinner meetings with good food and entertainment. Their Bible studies occur every Thursday, and of course, there is Bible study every

Susan Evans took some children on a field trip in her convertible. Afterwards, the McDowell twins wanted daddy to take the top off his car too! Doris and Pete Baugham worked in the nursery. Some of the kids looked forward to sitting on Pete's lap and chewing the chewing gum he had for them.

Rush Hamrick also worked in the nursery. The children that sat on his lap wanted him to draw pictures on their arms with his red (washable) pen.

Carol Ann Hoard: Susan Evans has been my son Lavery's teacher in several organizations in the church. We saw Susan one day and Lavery explained to me "That was Miss Susan. She lives at the church."

Singles fellowship at Café Phoenix

Nancy Mercier: When we went on the retreat at Ridgecrest, Bob Dills played his guitar, and we had a great time singing and getting to know each other. Reggie Ledford didn't desert us when he and Jeri got married. He has been a teacher and department head for the Singles for over 20 years. We have helped the kids at Christine's Home with Carowinds passes, pizza, and WalMart gift cards.

week in Sunday School.

The group has gone on retreats at Ridgecrest and Fort Caswell. Their mission trip to the Fort Beck Indian Reservation in Poplar, Montana, involved 243 children and resulted in 26 conversions. They presented a "New Song" concert.

The singles have sent a boy and a girl to summer camp through the Boys and Girls Club. They donated $2000 to Heifer International to provide animals to needy overseas families.

College Ministry

The College Class has been in existence since the late 1950's or early 1960's. Sally and John Barker started the class in an upper room in the bank across the street. Barbara and John Brock led it for a while and so did Lynn and Art Moss. Lynn taught the class for several years.

In the late 1990's Sallie Suttle along with Rex and Kathy Morris led the ministry to college students by teaching the Sunday School class. They also reached out to the students studying in Cleveland County by way of Sunday evening Bible study groups and local ministry projects. This ministry provided for fellowship and encouragement of area students as well as giving the students an opportunity to lead in worship services throughout the year. During these years, and since then, First Baptist members participated in the Gardner-Webb University "club and church days" in order to welcome new students into our area.

In 2002 the College Class went on a sailing mission trip to the Bahamas. They worked on Andros Island helping at a school, living on the sail boat, making picnic tables, and giving devotionals.

Laraine Baker is the class teacher as of 2007. Each year, the College Class leads the worship service on the Sunday after Christmas.

The youth of the church send the people in the College Class care packages in the Spring, and send them cards of encouragement during exams and during other important times in their lives. Brenda Curtis' Sunday School class secretly "adopt" the college freshmen, do nice things for them during the year, and reveal their identity at a banquet at the end of the year when students return to First Baptist Church.

The Deaf Department

In 1969 very few deaf people in Cleveland County had any connection with a church. Shelby Presbyterian had started a deaf class, but it was struggling.

Roland Leath, our Minister of Education, started contacting people interested in starting a class for the deaf. He heard Mary Emma Hambright had taught the deaf but did not know sign language, so he encouraged her to take sign language classes at Cleveland Tech. The teacher of that class was Mae Blackwood, whose parents were deaf. He learned that two of our hearing members, Carl Poston and Susan Hamrick, were already taking that class simply because of their interest in deaf people. He learned that Mrs. John Berry Hamrick, whose son was deaf, was in contact with deaf people throughout the area and was anxious for them to have a chance to be active in a church.

Roland Leath set up the deaf ministry at First Baptist Church with Mary Emma Hambright as the Sunday School teacher and Mae Blackwood signing for Sunday morning worship services. All the interested parties met and planned a party for the area deaf on October 11, 1969, with Sunday services for the deaf to start the next day.

Letters went out to churches and deaf people in the area about the planned starting date for the deaf ministry. The two teachers along with Susan Hamrick and Mrs. John Berry Hamrick went from house to house where deaf people lived and invited them to come. Arrangements were made to use the church van for

those who needed transportation.

On Sunday, October 12, 1969, First Baptist deaf ministry began. It attracted deaf people from all over the area. Sunday evening services were signed at one time. A deaf Training Union was started. The evening services and Training Union portions of the ministry did not work out and were discontinued. The deaf program was so successful that other churches began offering a similar program. The van was no longer needed to transport the deaf from distant parts of the county.

Deaf Sunday School class signs "I love you."

The deaf department started out in the Ladies Parlor, was moved to other class rooms as they became available, and is now (2007) on the third floor of the B-building. Through the years it has involved many of our hearing members, has benefited from deaf revivals involving state and national denominational leaders, and has provided spiritual and social opportunities for the deaf.

Since 1994 many changes have occurred in the Deaf Class. More young people have joined. Many of our older members have died, including Gene Gibson, J. R. Bowen and his wife Alyse, and Helen Click. J. R. Bowen was the only deaf member to serve as deacon. He was accompanied by a translator from the church.

The Deaf Class could always depend on Martha Hamrick and Jo Ann Surratt to interpret the worship services. Others who interpreted for a time were Jennifer Burton and Christine Whitehouse. Holly Martin became the primary interpreter in 2000 and very willingly interprets for weddings, funerals, camp weekends, 40 Days of Community, and doctor's visits. Jenna Hanson, a Gardner-Webb University student, has now joined as a substitute interpreter.

Barbara Gibson was Director of the Deaf Department for

Billy Click: I remember Barbara Gibson telling us about a woman, about to be raped who called out "In the name of Jesus, get off me!" The astonished would-be rapist ran away. Sometime later, I was getting mineral water at Lithia Springs when I realized that a poisonous copperhead snake was about to strike my hand. Using sign language, I signed, "In the name of Jesus, get away from me!" And the snake did.

[Editor's Note: So now we know that snakes know sign language too.]

years and was zealous in recruiting good, long-term interpreters. Angela Barrett is filling that position now and is also serving as a deacon.

As a result of the Deaf Class, members have grown in their ability to pray. In 2006 they conducted a Sunday evening worship service for the entire church, including special music, drama, and preaching, all by class members. They have also expressed their love for others with food and shelter for the needy, medicine, and transportation to doctors, and elsewhere as needed.

Sunday School Literature

Sunday school plays an important part in preparing the people of First Baptist Church for being on mission in their daily lives, and the literature used by the various classes and the Bible study it encourages is vital.

According to Ralph Sullivan, who handled Sunday School literature for the church for many years, most Baptist churches, including First Baptist Church, used the same literature which came from the Baptist Sunday School Board. The literature came out quarterly and was aimed at specific age groups.

In the early 1990's Minister of Education, Steve Zimmerman, decided to give classes a choice between the Family Bible Series based on the King James Version of the Bible where all adults used the same literature and the Life and Work Series based on the New International Version where literature was provided for specific age groups.

First Baptist Church chose the Life and Work Series that was aimed at specific age groups: *Directions* for ages 18-34, *Pursuits* for ages 35-54, *Ventures* for ages 55-69, *Pathways* for ages 70 and up, and special literature for children of different ages. All lessons were based on the same scripture.

Joyce Lee and Ralph Sullivan review literature order.

A few years later, the Life and Work Series became the Family Bible Study, and the age related quarterlies were *Life Answers* 18-30, Life *Truths* 31-54, *Life Ventures* 55 and up, and age-graded materials for children. Also, three new series were offered: *Explore the Bible* Series and *Life Words* (non-graded King James Version) and *MasterWorks*. By this time most materials used other versions of the Bible instead of the King James Version.

Around 2000 some classes began ordering *Formations* published by Smyth & Helwys Publishing Com-

pany. Then several classes ordered *Uniform Lessons* from Smyth & Helwys. The publishing company is a free press and does not report to any specific denominational source as it focuses on quality Bible study for use in churches.

As of 2007, *Formations* is used by three men's classes and three women's classes. The *Uniform* Series is used by one women's class and the oldest couple's class. *Life Lessons* is used by the youngest adult class and the Single's class. *Explore the Bible* is used by four ladies' classes and by the deaf class. *Life Truths* is used by two men's classes. Some of the materials are available in large print. *Life Ventures* is used by the younger adult couple's class, three men's classes, four ladies' classes, and extension members. *MasterWorks* is used by one adult class. Materials for preschool, children, and youth come from LifeWay Christian Resources (formerly known as the Baptist Sunday School Board).

Mission group shop for others, 1998.

Church literature was ordered and distributed by Ralph Sullivan for many years. It is now ordered by Perry Holleman and distributed by Joyce Lee.

From the First Baptist Church extended family, Keith Gammons, son of Linda and Mike Gammons, is currently Vice President for Production at Smyth & Helwys. Pastor Tony Tench has been a contributor to literature for both publishing houses. He has written articles for Lifeway's *Biblical Illustrator* as well as Smith & Helwys' devotional guide *Reflections*.

Haroldo Pinto is marketing Director of Lifeway Christian Resources in Nashville, TN. He was an exchange student from Brazil who lived with the Harold Causby family in 1969-70. He was a member of First Baptist during that time. The Causbys have remained close, considering him their third "son."

Evelyn West: In the past we had services every day during the Week of Prayer. During the reorganization, we called every woman to see what kind of group she would prefer. Leaders planned elaborate programs for the monthly general meetings. In one group meeting, I remember missionary Stella Austin stayed at our house when she came to speak. Each year we tried to take all our officers to Ridgecrest during WMU week. Each leader went to seminars that involved her particular WMU responsibility, compared notes each evening, and pretty well planned our work for the year. One time we had a birthday party during WMU Week for everyone in the church, and every WMU organization had a part in the program. The WMU would take on any job the pastor asked us to do. Every WMU group still engages in mission activity every month, and mission action groups take on long term projects. We took a bus load to hear Ann Graham Lotz in Charlotte.

Virginia Bost: I invited a missionary

to speak during our Week of Prayer. When she didn't show up, Rev. John Lawrence did an impromptu program. The missionary had marked her calendar wrong and showed up a day late. Those weeks at Ridgecrest were very important for our WMU and very inspiring. We worked hard to see that our mission offering goals were met. For several years the church would rent a house for a missionary family home on leave and our WMU would clean it up and provide food. We worked with the international students at Gardner-Webb. We reported on WMU activities to the church conference every month. Bertha Smith was a missionary and a dynamic person who spoke at our church several times. Our group was named for her.

Becky Hamrick speaks at Daughters of the King Ladies Night Out.

Ginny Spears: At one time we had so many in WMU that we had two general meetings, one in the daytime and one at night. For years we tried to get Dr. Watterson to let WMU have a Wednesday night devoted to missions, but we didn't succeed with that until Dr. Stacey came along. One of the music directors at Ridgecrest was so good that we tried to get him interested in our church. Some

WMU director, Dawn Anthony at work in Trinidad

Woman's Missionary Union (W. M. U.)

In the March 5, 2006, Informer, Pastor Tony Tench wrote this about the Women's Missionary Union: "WMU has from its beginning in 1888 impacted worldwide missions. Many of the more than 10,000 Baptist missionaries in North America and around the world credit WMU and the GA's as the most significant influence God used to impress upon them that personal call to missions."

One of the presidents of the International Mission Board has said, "It is the WMU that has acted as the missions conscience of the convention by keeping the responsibility of reaching a lost world before the local churches."

For many years the ladies of First Baptist Church met in small groups called "circles." However, during the 1970's, the powers that be on the national scene decided that the WMU needed to be reorganized. Evelyn West was WMU director when the change was made. Following directions from Birmingham, she and her fellow workers did away with "circles" and called every woman in the church in order to give her an opportunity to choose which type of group she would like to be a part of. All groups were to promote missions, but each type of group met a different interest.

Women in Action groups adopted and worked on mission projects in the community. Round Table groups read and reported on books on Christian subjects. Bible Study groups studied the Bible. Prayer groups prayed for individuals, groups, and the church as a whole, as well as for missions. Witness groups learned how to witness to non-Christians, and set out to do so.

Acteens was for teenage girls, Girls in Action (GAs) was for pre-teen girls, and Mission Friends was for pre-

school children. All the children and youth groups were to learn about the scope of missions. They learn about the work of missionaries around the world and our role as missionaries at home.

Some people who had belonged to a particular "circle" for years did not care for the change, but eventually things worked out. Thirty-seven years later this is still fundamentally the organization used by WMU.

WMU invited missionaries to speak at their monthly meetings. Starting in the late 1990's they were given charge of the church prayer meeting once a month, and they quite often had missionaries speak at those prayer meetings. This "Missions Night" practice has proven to be a great opportunity to highlight the cooperative work of missions before our congregation.

Through the years WMU has had missionary speakers from just about every North American and Foreign Mission field, including Jordan, the Philippines, Tokyo, Liberia, to the Cherokee Indians, Zambia, Kenya, Japan, New York, Brazil, Wycliff Translators, Barbados, Gaza, West Virginia, Bangkok, Thailand, Hong Kong, Peru, Winston-Salem, Bolivia, Timbuktu, Indonesia, France, Tanzia, Korea, Vietnam, Nepal, Okinawa, Nigeria, Togo, Spain, Charlotte, Ivory Coast, Mali, Iraq, Greenville, New Orleans, Hawaii, California, Zimbabwe, Alabama, Richmond, Jerusalem, Kansas, Georgia, Taiwan, India, Russia, Venezuela, Alabama, Malawi, and many more.

Hands on Mission Ramblewood

Along with the churches of the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association, First Baptist Church has participated in World Mission Conferences and On Mission Celebrations that have hosted missionaries from around the world to speak in our churches. These missions experiences have been one way that the church

of us went to Richmond to celebrate WMU's one hundredth birthday. One of our members, Carrie Wacaster, did mission studies all over the state and was honored by the State Convention for 50 years of service. Marie Wall started a sewing group to sew for Crisis Pregnancy. Alta Pernell and I went to an Education Conference. During a break, we shopped and Alta picked up a scarf with her pocketbook by mistake. She took it back and apologized. Some groups provided luggage for foster kids being moved around from place to place....

Becky Hamrick: Before the reorganization in the 1970's, every circle was the same except for age. Along about the mid 70's our WMU rated 100% on the state check list and was honored accordingly. For a long time now we have been feeding the homeless on Fridays.

Josie Garver: Frank and I went on three one-year mission trips from the church. I resigned as WMU president to go to Thailand. English as a second language is going on right now with ladies from our church teaching it. Our WMU got lists of missionaries on leave so we could invite them to come to our church, and missionaries got lists of churches wanting that kind of thing. Our groups help support Duke Power's share the warmth fund. One group sent

money to buy a goat for a family on the mission field so that they could use or sell its milk. We help stock the Food Closet and the Toy Store for the Association and assist the Christines Home. We do a different mission project every month.

Beth Hamrick: We gave missionary Evelyn Moss a shower of gifts. In 1975 we started a group for young women. Once when we were at Ridgecrest, Arthine Wells woke me at 5:00 AM cooking ham because she didn't care for the breakfast they would serve. Sometimes we took our own food to Ridgecrest.

Polly Causby: About 1992 or so, we heard of churches making flags for a parade of flags to promote Lottie Moon Christmas offering. Rachel Schenck and I bought cloth and made flags for many countries where we have missionaries and made black flags for those with no missionaries. We ended up with 72 flags and 8 black ones. ...We used to switch groups depending partly on age.... The WMU mission magazine changed names a few years ago. It was previously *Royal Service* and now *Mission Mosaic*. The WMU helps with a block party to advertise our Vacation Bible School to our own people and to the neighborhood.

Jacky Stone: Our group gave a luncheon for missionary Evelyn Moss.

Margaret Litton: Food is always a good drawing card for WMU groups since we enjoy fellowship together around the monthly missions theme!

Lynn Moss: I sometimes drove the church van when we went to Ridgecrest. When missionary Martha Franks was very old, she did a program on leadership. I don't remember what she said, but I remember she had us hold out our hands, palms up, to praise God and receive His blessings. Fifty-seven of us went to a Beth Moore conference in Birmingham, along with 20,000

has lived out the old saying "Trust the Lord and Tell the People." As the people of First Baptist have heard the missionary need and calling, they have faithfully responded with their prayers, their gifts, and their lives.

The State Baptist Convention has declared the WMU at First Baptist Church to be "Distinguished" on many occasions, and there are not many groups that are so honored.

As of 2007, 181 ladies are a part of WMU at First Baptist Church. The primary purpose of WMU is to educate and involve women, girls, and pre-schoolers in the cause of Christian missions. Its mission is to equip the congregation as a whole to understand, embrace, and live the mission of God!

Currently, Dawn Anthony is WMU Director and heads a team of 28 ladies who plan and execute mission night programs and mission projects. There are 13 WMU groups that meet monthly, mostly in the homes of members. Bible study groups include a church-wide group and groups named for Evelyn Hill, Mary C. Robertson, Letha Saunders, Lonnie Proctor, Stella Austin, Lois Leath, and Carrie Wacaster. Round table groups are named for Laura Lawrence and Evelyn Moss. A prayer group is named for Jean Teague, a witness group for Charlotte Swift, and

Anna Hawkins teaches back yard Bible study in Charleston, South Carolina.

there is one Women in Action group.

Girls in Action (grades 1-5), Royal Ambassadors (boys grades 1-5), and Mission Friends (pre-school) meet weekly during the school year.

Typical local missions carried out by the WMU include Friday outreach lunches for the homeless, comfort baskets for cancer patients, clothes for a local children's home, diapers, etc., for the crisis Pregnancy Center, food items for the associational closet, annual luncheon for visually impaired, Greatest Treat Festival outreach at Halloween, feeding workers at the Habitat project, "Pack a Trunk" with needed items for missions, Vacation Bible School block party to reach local neighborhoods, angel tree at Christmas, gifts for needy school children, and many more.

The WMU plans a monthly missions night for the church every first Wednesday of the month and promotes all the church mission offerings.

[Editor's note: If the men of the church ever get as involved in the church and in missions as the ladies are, First Baptist Church will set the world on fire!]

other women. She has conferences like that every year in Atlanta, Charleston, WVA, Greensboro, Knoxville, and other places. We used to go to the WMU Convention every year and after each conference we would gather in somebody's room to talk, eat, and pray. Sometimes we would sleep on the balcony.

Janice Boyles: GA's were big back then in the 50's and 60's. We do a Valentine Banquet for the visually impaired every year. We have packed a trunk for mission groups going overseas. We are packing backpacks for needy children. We sponsor an Angel Tree for the needy at Christmas. I reserved rooms for 20 of us in Greensboro when we went to the WMU Convention. When we got there, they told us we had no reservations and none were available because of a golf tournament. We raised some polite Cain and got our rooms.

Susan Grose with her little Bible School friend

Rush Hamrick: When we first started in 1947, we had 30 or 40 people and Dr. Wall kept us busy. "Red" Champion became a state leader and Horace Easom was employed by the North Carolina State Baptist Convention to help Brotherhood grow. I remember that "Bones" McKinney, the famous basketball player, was one of our programs.

Don Allen: Early on, our Brotherhood had 100 members and was the largest in the state. Arthur Smith, the country entertainer, was one of our programs. But in a few years, we were gone. We started back in the 1990's but after a year we collapsed again. We did some pretty good deeds when we were in existence, though, like getting junk out of the church basement and selling it, cutting grass, painting houses for widows. We had a job jar on the breezeway. Widows and others put job requests in it. When one of the Baptist Men had time, he would take a slip out of the job jar and go do it. John Lawrence would take one or two of us and go visiting the sick or the unsaved.

Harold Causby: I was under the impression that John Lawrence started the Fisherman's Club. I know it was very active when John was our pastor. I remember when our program back in the 50's was a man who purported to read palms. He alarmed Herman Best by what he read in Herman's palm. We painted several houses and fixed a few roofs. We had group leaders back then and they called to make sure members were coming to meetings. Two of us visited an 83 year old man along with John Lawrence, and the man accepted the Lord.

Baptist Men

Members returning from armed service in World War II started the Veterans Brotherhood in 1947, and it quickly became First Baptist Brotherhood during Dr. Zeno Wall's time as pastor. When Harlan Harris became pastor in 1948, the Brotherhood started the Fisherman's Club to evangelize the unsaved. The Brotherhood was very important to John Lawrence during his pastorate that began in 1954, and Fisherman's Club was especially active. In 1967, two years before Gene Watterson became pastor, the Brotherhood reported 214 members and was the largest in the state. When the first church history went to press in 1969, Brotherhood membership was 110.

Throughout its existence the Brotherhood has experienced periods of activity and periods of dormancy. Church records tell nothing about the organization from 1970 to 1975. In 1975 it reorganized and had 87 men at its first breakfast. Anywhere from 60 to 70 attended their monthly meetings. They sponsored a Lay Renewal Weekend, worked unsuccessfully against establishment of an Alcoholic Control Board, and assisted members who needed help.

Sunday School helpers prepare to serve a fellowship meal.

The Brotherhood or Baptist Men, as it was renamed, disappeared after a few years. When Harold Causby became laymen of the year for the NC Baptist Men in 1983, it was on the basis of his work statewide. He says he was ashamed of how inactive the church Baptist Men were at that time.

Baptist Men revived about 1990 and started having monthly meetings again with programs that were interesting, entertaining, informative, and inspiring. Patients from Broughton attended one meeting (editor's note: no wise cracks, please). Again, members who needed help found Baptist Men to be willing and able. They

painted several houses and fixed several roofs at that time. In 2001 they helped roof the associational building but soon after disappeared.

While the Baptist Men's organization of First Baptist Church has changed in its form through the years, the Baptist men of First Baptist Church have continued to be on mission together. Since 2003, men and women of the church have built three Habitat for Humanity houses. They have served on multiple mission trips to assist hurricane ravaged Honduras and Mississippi traveling to Laurel, Gulfport, and Pearlington, Mississippi, to work with the North Carolina Baptist Men and CBF of North Carolina to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Several First Baptist men have participated in brotherhood and accountability encouragement through the New Wilderness Adventures Ministry in Cleveland County.

In 2003 they started having monthly meetings again at a local restaurant. By 2007 they called themselves R.E.A.L. Men, had eight or ten at each meeting, and their agenda is eating, conversation, and praying briefly for the sick and for the church.

Fred Flowers: Just to add a laugh to some of our meetings, we would ask a member a question that couldn't be answered, and when he failed to answer, we cut his tie off close to the knot. Of course, we staged it with the victim ahead of time so the tie would be a throwaway. We dressed up in coats and ties for our meetings in those days. For five or six months during the early 1990's we started meeting in the chapel on Saturday nights to pray, sing *Victory in Jesus*, and listen to a band. It lasted a while but was not supported by the staff. Attendees were members, guests, and street people–anybody who wanted to come. I remember the job jar. We painted houses, cut grass, whatever.

Herman, Harold, Don, Fred: We remember when we took several carloads of men to Greensboro to hear R. G. LeTourneau, the manufacturer of heavy equipment. He kept ten percent of his income and gave 90% to the Lord.

Frank Garver: Bill Wilder used to play his harmonica at our meetings. We called him Boxcar Willie. Carver Wood was in the Fisherman's Club. He invited and witnessed to a neighbor every Saturday until he accepted Christ. For a while 15 or 20 of us met at Days Inn every month for lunch.

Fred Flowers, Frank Garver, Harold Causby: Each time we started up again the same people would come, but they were years older. We couldn't seem to interest the young men. Eventually, the older men who came back died off or lost energy, and Baptist Men no longer existed.

Mission team at work in Jamaica

Tebin McDowell: I was chairman of Deacons in 2002 and in the absence of our church moderator was asked to preside at a church conference that was to decide what to do about the fact that our weekday ministries program was heavily in the red. The issue had been warmly discussed among our people for weeks, and some even thought the program should be abandoned. Attendance at the church conference was unusually heavy, and I was nervous.

Members of the congregation began voicing their opinions and disputing the opinions of others. Motions began to fly, and then came motions on top of motions. Several people tried to interpret and clarify motions that others had made. One man offered to call for the question if I wanted to do so. A woman suffering from dementia kept trying to get up and stand by me. I had my hands full dealing with the discussion, the profusion of motions, and the poor woman who kept talking though she obviously didn't know what was going on.

Finally, the church decided to keep the Weekday Ministries program, and it is now one of the strongest programs we have.

I also remember when our deacons considered the possibility of reducing the number of church committees. After a great deal of discussion they voted to refer the matter to a new committee. So then we had 33 committees instead of 32!

Right after the turn of the century we decided to re-structure our committees. Duties of committees were combined so as to make our committee

Deacons

Most actions of the church start with the ministerial staff or a ministry team or a church committee. After details have been worked out, the proposal goes to the deacons and then to the church in conference.

By and large, the church in conference has confidence in the committees and teams that initiate proposals and in the fact that proposals have been discussed and approved by the deacons and recommended for further discussion by the church in conference. In keeping with our congregational form of church government which acknowledges the autonomy of the local church in making decisions, matters coming before the church in conference await the consideration and the vote of the membership at that conference. Church members are encouraged to be present and to be actively involved in the making of decisions that arise at these monthly meetings which occur ten days following the deacons' meeting each month.

Deacon of the Week (Charles Nalley)

When the church became incorporated in 1996, it seemed natural that the Board of Deacons would become the Board of Directors for the corporation. The church Constitution and By-Laws makes this statement about the role and responsibility of deacons:

The Pastor and other members of the ministerial staff are primarily responsible for the spiritual ministry of the church but shall assist in business matters, while the deacons assisted by the Administrative Coordinator are primarily responsible for business matters but will assist in the spiritual ministry.

The deacons serve three year terms with one-third rotating off the Board of Deacons each year as they function as servant leaders in the life of the church. The Nominating Committee brings 16 names in nomination to serve as deacons with 8 being elected each year for a total of 24 deacons serving on the Board of Deacons.

Both the church and the deacons decide from time to time that deacons should also be servants of the congregation, and deacon minutes through the years reflect that feeling.

In 1976 deacons were asked to reach out to church members and to set an example in pledging financial support.

In 1978 they were urged to visit the sick and shut-ins after prayer meeting on Wednesday nights and to contact inactive families.

In 1980 deacons were responsible for members assigned to them through the deacon family ministry plan.

In 1988 deacons were urged to join the staff and the Building and Grounds Committee in a drive to pay off the church's $180,000 debt.

Beginning in 1996 the Deacon of the Week was to participate in Sunday morning service and to visit new members and visitors and the sick the rest of that week. Also in 1996 deacons were assigned church families for ministry.

In 1998 the Deacon Family Ministry became the First Touch Ministry and involved 145 church members and deacons visiting other members.

In 1999 the deacons were urged to be involved in the church program. That same year deacons were urged to pray in the prayer room before each Sunday morning service.

Annually the deacons set up standing committees on outreach, worship, prayer, First Touch, safety and security, capital planning, and strategy. Each deacon is assigned to a specific committee.

Extension Department

First Baptist Church is 160 years old. Many of its members are elderly and infirmed. Some of them can no longer come to church, but they want to be remembered and want to remain a part of the church. The Extension Department makes this possible.

In 1965 Essie Davis and Roland Leath, Minister of Education and Music, saw a need for a ministry among home-bound members of the church. They recruited Ray and C.C. McMurry, and the Extension Department was born. Twenty years later Essie Davis passed the ministry on to Alta Pernell, and Alta has served ever since 1985.

The department has from 60 to 77 members at a time. Church members who are unable to come to church do not automatically

structure more efficient. We called in a consultant from the State Convention. He recommended that we only have a few committees to carry out administrative duties and have teams to carry out ministry. The church followed his recommendation.

Don Allen: I was Chairman of Deacons in 1975. On May 4th of that year we set goals for a Miracle Sunday and exceeded every goal we set. A true Miracle Sunday!

David Qualls: We had a deacon retreat at Camp McCall. At the urging of our speaker, we began washing each others feet the way Jesus did. Danny Hawkins washed my feet and dropped my sock in the water. You might say he was a foot-washing and a sock-washing Baptist!

Chris Folk: When I became chairman, I looked at the by-laws. They make it plain that deacons have administrative duties and assist the ministerial staff as needed. A lot of deacons minister in other parts of the church program.

Danny Hawkins: When Dr. Canoy resigned, our search committee had a real problem. Most of the people in the church thought we should immediately call Tony Tench, our Education Minister. Associational and State Baptist officials advised us to go through the full search process. We ended up with 200 applications and called Tony anyway!

Becky Hamrick: I was chairman when we lost almost our entire staff after Dr. Watterson's retirement. Chris White and Wayne Stacy were very helpful with their experience and advice.

Becky Hamrick and **David Qualls:** In spite of all the problems of heading the Board of Deacons, that year of service was the most rewarding of my Christian life!

J. D. Baldree: At a church conference in the 1950's or 60's the floor

was opened for deacon nominations. Audie Powell nominated Dick Lackey. "You can't do that!" someone called out. "Why not?" asked Audie. "He's a Methodist," came the answer. Audie insisted that even so, Dick would make a good deacon.

Dr. Gene Watterson: I remember a deacons' meeting where Dr. Robert Jones said, "I move that we carpet the nursery." Another deacon complained that it might cost a million dollars. Dr. Jones said, "I want to amend my motion to include this direction, that the cost of the carpet is not to exceed a million dollars."

become members of the Extension Department, but they will be visited by Alta Pernell or one of her assistants and given an opportunity to join.

If a church member joins the Extension Department, a visitor will be assigned to that member. Sometimes the visitor is one person. Sometimes a couple will be assigned. There are generally 38 to 40 visitors visiting the 60 to 77 shut-ins.

Every visitor is called each month to let them know when the literature for the shut-ins is ready to be distributed. The literature is placed on the rack near the church office, and includes a Sunday School quarterly, an *Open Windows* devotional guide, the *Mature Living* magazine, and a letter from one of the visitors. The visitors are expected to pick up the literature and carry it to their shut-ins.

Visitors are expected to visit as necessary, celebrate birthdays, and keep the shut-ins informed about the church. Just before Extension Sunday in May, visitors make up baskets of gifts of small useful items and take them to the shut-ins. At Christmas visitors take a poinsettia provided by the church to their shut-ins.

The extension members being visited in their homes or in the assisted living home or in the nursing homes love to have visitors come. They love even more to see their pastor come. They crave a little attention at a lonely and painful time in their lives.

Alta Pernell congratulates Beuna Hendrick Queen on her 100th birthday.

During the Advent season each year, church members gather and divide up into Christmas caroling teams to pay visits to the homes of the extension members. These outings are a blessing to all as God's love is shared through song. In 2006 the caroling teams also took along the elements of the Lord's Supper to share with the extension members since they are not able to join us for this communion regularly. One year a caroling group was greeted by the extension member with loads of cookies and baked goods.

When the call came that "four or five" people would be coming she thought the caller said "forty-five!" That group had their work "cut out for them" after they sang.

Weekday Ministries 30th Anniversary Celebration with many of the original and early staff

Weekday Ministry

In 1976 our church decided to start a child development center. Carol Ball was hired as the first director; Ann Pharr and Karen Pearson were teachers; Iris Maloney was an assistant teacher. They underwent a concentrated week of training at the Thomasville Child Development Center and opened for business on August 23, 1976. The director at the Thomasville center advised the new staff saying, "Always keep your eyes on Christ and the Child Development Center of First Baptist Church will always have the reputation of being a great place for children."

The Center started with one program, three students, and two classrooms, but it grew to six programs. This year (2007) it has nine classes and 102 children. The infant program started in 1998 under the leadership of Debbie Harrill. Weekday Ministries included Adult Day Care for a while in the 1980's while Suzie Anthony was director. The hearing impaired were served in the 1990's while Betty Denkler was director. After-school care was offered 1977 – 1998.

When the first staff was being trained, they were advised to keep their eyes on Christ, and this they have done. The W. M. U. has a Mission Friends group for children in the Center, and it meets Wednesday mornings. Our ministers also meet with the children on Wednesday mornings. Parents who enroll their children in the program know that their children will be taught Christianity along with other things.

Our Child Development

Workers take infants for a stroll.

Stough Wray: My grandson enjoys the church daycare program, including the meals prepared by Georgia Cooper. I took him to a local restaurant and to my surprise he ordered beets. However, as soon as he got them in his mouth he made a face, and I let him spit them out in a napkin. He whispered, "Ms. Georgia needs to come and teach them how to fix beets."

Tony Tench: One of our Child Development Center students, who is used to seeing me and the other ministers on Wednesdays during "chapel time," sat with her parents one Sunday evening channel surfing the television. At that time our Sunday evening service was being broadcast on local access channel 19. As they watched, all of a sudden there was "Pastor Tony" on the television screen. Upon seeing me, the girl exclaimed, "There's Pastor Tony. If he's there then I am supposed to be there." Once again, a little child will lead them!

Penny Corn (Weekdays Ministries Director): One of our teachers and a student were walking along and admiring the beautiful sky and clouds. They agreed that they both wanted to go to heaven, and the child explained with words and motions how it works:

"I guess you will go to girl heaven, and I will go to boy heaven. Girl heaven is over to the right in the sky, and boy heaven is over to the left."

Occasionally, we ask the children to complete sentences. The results say a lot:

My mom is ...
...so smart she even knows how to clean the kitchen all by herself.
...as pretty as a dress and high heel shoes.
...special because God made her that way.
...special because she says so.
...smart. She even knows how to tell Daddy what to do.
...as pretty as a red dog.

To have a heart means...
...don't wrestle at school.
...to say nice things.
...don't talk and sing at nap time.
...to say I love you.
...to share my guitar.

An apple a day... keeps your teeth from coming out.
The early bird... gets tired.
Too many cooks in the kitchen... makes too much food.
You can lead a horse to water ... but you gotta get him back to the barn.
When the cat's away... you can't catch it.
A picture is worth... looking at.
You make your bed... you make it all up.
What goes around... goes to a circle.
What goes up... must stop.
It takes two... to play in Homeliving.
Out of the frying pan and... it catches on fire.

Center staff (and our church) have been honored for excellence. Ann Pharr was named as the North Carolina Ministries Association Teacher of the Year. In 1997 our Center became the first church based one in Cleveland County to achieve a AA license. The rating system was revised in 2000, and under the leadership of Penny Corn, we became the only four-star church based center in Cleveland County. In 2007 Pat Sloan, teacher in the pre-kindergarten class, received the Terri Lynn Lockoff National Teacher's Award sponsored by Tylenol.

Penny Corn displays Cleveland County Child Care of the Year Award for 2006.

At the present time (2007) our Weekday Ministry consists of the Child Development Center, which offers a full day program for infants through pre-kindergarten, and Mother's Morning Out, which offers a half day program for toddlers through pre-kindergarten. Clara Spangler serves as the Coordinator of

Weekday Ministries children present Habitat for Humanity bank to Pastor Tony.

the Mother's Morning Out ministry.

Penny Corn has been Weekday Ministries Director since 2003. The longest serving directors were Suzie Anthony, who was director from 1979 to 1986, followed by Betty Denkler, who was director 1986-1997. Teachers with long tenure were Ann Pharr (27 years), Karen Pearson (23 years), Iris Maloney (21 years), Donna Lovelace (19 years), and Beth Shull (18 years).

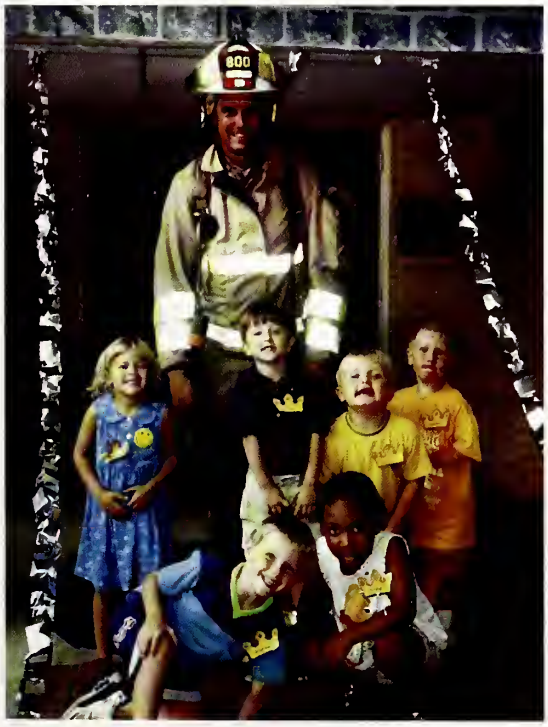
The Richard Pearson family had children in the program for 16 years, and the Doug Wright family for nine years. Two former students (Sara and Lydia Denkler) came back as teachers. Many former students have grown up and enrolled their children in the program. Several former students are now serving in the armed forces.

Children listen to a story at VBS.

Vacation Bible School

When First Baptist Church enlarged its facilities in 1928, it conducted its first Vacation Bible School, the first in Shelby. It drew 425 children from all over.

Vacation Bible School through the years has been an important week for children at First Baptist Church and in the Shelby community. In earlier years a typical VBS day included assembly at 8:30/9:00 a.m. in the sanctuary for pledges to the American flag, the Christian flag, and the Bible followed by songs related to each pledge. Music and a Bible lesson usually followed. Children then marched by age groups with their teachers to their assigned classrooms where they engaged in Bible lessons/stories, scripture memorization, character stories, crafts, snacks, and recreation/play until 11:00/11:30 a.m.



VBS children learn about community helpers.

In 1997 an announcement at deacon's meeting indicated that there would be no Vacation Bible School because of the difficulty of recruiting enough workers. Deacon Harold Causby responded, "First Baptist Church will have Vacation Bible School."

This resulted in looking for strategies to recruit workers better. The result was a change in the meeting time from morning to evening sessions. The hours from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. were chosen so that working adults and youth would be more available to assist with the program.

Vacation Bible School curriculum from Gospel Light publications have been used at First Baptist Church since 1997. Each year the theme for the week focuses around a different setting but always highlights Jesus as the Son of God. Themes have included "SonLight Island," "SonCastle Faire," "SonZone Discovery Center," "SonCanyon River," "SonTreasure Island," "SonGames," and "SonForce Kids." Skits with a continuing story related to the theme create great interest and keep the students eagerly awaiting the "end of the story" on the final evening. The FBC Players, an ever evolving and revolving drama team, faithfully bring the message of the week home on the stage.

Prior to the first night, rooms and hallways are highly decorated to reflect the week's theme. T-shirts with the logo are ordered for adults and students. A "Block Party" is held about a week before the beginning date to advertise and urge sign-ups. Colorful banners outside the church announce the date and theme thus encouraging sign-ups and attendance. Skits are performed at morning worship service to create excitement.

The more recent schedule, beginning at 5 p.m., includes supper in the Dover Activities Building for Grades 1-5 (supper for 4's at 5:30, Pre-K and Kindergarten at 6 p.m.). Worship in the sanctuary for Pre-K through Grade 5 begins at 5:30 p.m. Music, crafts, and recreation for different age groups are at various times between 6 and 8 p.m.

Classes are assigned names that reflect the week's theme.

A mission project is chosen each year. For example, in 2002 the project was to collect school supplies for needy children in Cleveland County Schools. Another year the project was to collect items (new socks,

Presentation of flags and Bible at VBS

underwear, toiletries, clothing, etc.) for Abuse Prevention Council/Coalition for the Homeless.

Children and workers wear their themed T-shirts to each evening's meeting.

A courtesy room with food and drinks for workers is set up in the parlor. Food is provided by Sunday School classes and individual members. Youth who helped with VBS are treated to a pizza party on Thursday evening following the closing program and decorations clean-up.

On Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m., a closing night program (Mini-Musicale) is presented by the children for parents and students. Parents are invited to visit the classrooms to meet the teachers and see the decorations and other projects done by their children.

Bible School is for children Pre-K through those just completing Grade 5. Approximately 250-300 children usually attend.

More than 150 workers are engaged in VBS each year. The church family sees this as an opportunity to reach out to the community with the good news about the Son of God.

Allie McArthur awaits the start of Vacation Bible Schoool.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) started in Texas in 1950. Bill Lutz, a member of First Baptist Church, had been in FCA while attending NC State, so he became the spark to get things rolling in Shelby in 1970.

The first organizational meeting was held at First Baptist Church, and pastor Gene Watterson helped get things started with the election of officers. The first meeting of FCA took place in the stadium at Shelby High, and the entire home side of the stadium was full. In the early days the adult chapter met at Bill Allen's BBQ restaurant. Today they meet every second Sunday of the month at First Baptist Church.

The membership and leadership of this adult FCA huddle include First Baptist members Frank and Josie Garver, Bob and Margaret Litton, and Jim and Linda Horn. Susan Grose has served as encourager of the FCA huddle at Crest Middle School.

As of 2007 there are FCA huddles in every middle and high school in Cleveland County and also one at Gardner-Webb. The dues support a part-time director, who ministers to coaches and athletes at various schools. They also provide scholarships for athletes to attend FCA camps.

Linda Horn receiving an award for service from Bill Weaver on behalf of the Cleveland County Adult Chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes for 1988.
—photo courtesy The Star

On Mission with Gardner-Webb University

Rev. Watterson receives honorary degree in 1974.

As pointed out in the first history of First Baptist Church, the church and Gardner-Webb University have been intertwined through the years. During the years of the Great Depression, Dr. Zeno Wall served the church as its pastor and served Gardner-Webb as its unpaid president. Horace Eason served the church as Education Minister and was chief money raiser for the college during those years. The college could very possibly have disappeared if the people of First Baptist Church had not come forward.

Four members of First Baptist Church have served as president of Gardner-Webb. In addition to Dr. Wall, Dr. Eugene Poston served from 1961 to 1976. Dr. Chris White served from 1986 to 2002. Dr. Frank Bonner has served since 2005.

Members of First Baptist have served and are serving as trustees of the university. Some have given such outstanding service that they have been awarded Honorary Doctorate Degrees, such as Lloyd Bost, Pat Spangler, Gene Watterson, Mae Stroup, Charles I. Dover, Cecil Gilliatt, Forrest Feezor, and Fields Young III.

The honorary degree, Doctor of Humanities, awarded to Lloyd Bost in 1971 was the first ever given by Gardner-Webb and acknowledged his service in raising money and heading the trustees. Pat Spangler performed similar services for the university, had a residence hall named for him in 1971 and was awarded an honorary doctorate of Humanities degree.

Coach Eddie Holbrook, deacon, coaching the Bulldogs in 1974 yearbook

Coach Steve Patton, also a deacon, has directed the football team since 1997.
–photo courtesy Gardner-Webb University

Dr. Chris White served as President of Gardner-Webb from 1986 - 2002.
–photo courtesy Gardner-Webb University

Two other members of the church, Fields Young III and Ralph (Scoot) Dixon, led the largest ever fund drive for the university (20 million dollars), and Fields was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in 1997.

Many campus buildings and structures bear the names of members of First Baptist Church:

The M. Christopher White School of Divinity was named for Dr. Chris White, who taught Sunday school at First Baptist Church, served as deacon chairman, and played the piano in the auditorium before morning worship services.

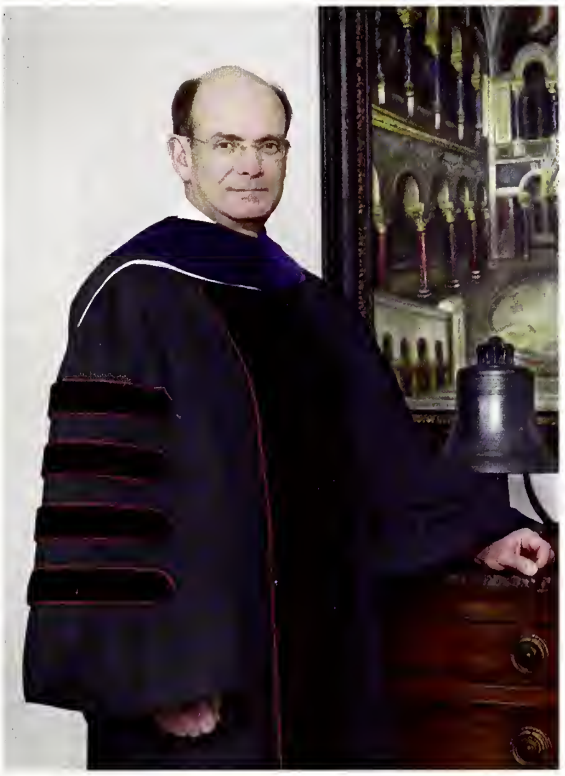
The R. Patrick Spangler Residence Hall was named for one of our members. The fieldhouse at the stadium is named for Fitzhugh Hamrick.

The Charles I. Dover Campus Center honored a textile industrialist and member of First Baptist Church. The Kathleen Dover Theater was named in honor of his wife. That theater was in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center, also named for two families in First Baptist Church.

Spangler Stadium was named in honor of Pat and Bud Spangler's father, and the main entrance gate to the university bears the name of Pat Spangler.

The Belk-Ellis Computer Center honors the W. P. Ellis family of First Baptist Church.

First Baptist Church or its members have funded and are funding scholarships at Gardner-Webb, including scholarships given in honor of Dr. Gene Watterson when he retired as pastor, scholarships for Divinity School students, Chris-



Dr. Frank Bonner was named President of Gardner-Webb in 2005.
–photo courtesy Gardner-Webb University

Steve Patton: One of the joys of working at Gardner-Webb University is that your faith in the Lord can be a tremendous asset to your success! It is extremely beneficial to have Christian trustees, a Christian president (Dr. Frank Bonner), a Christian athletics director (Chuck Burch), and a caring team-chaplain (Dr. Robert Canoy), that encourage all faculty/staff to be a positive influence on the student/athletes.

Therefore, praying with the athletes on a regular basis, as well as frequently speaking to various churches, youth groups, charities, and business groups about how we try to integrate football and Jesus just becomes the norm of being the head football coach at GWU. As a coaching staff, we base the entire football program philosophy on Galatians 3:9, 'And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due time, we shall reap the benefits!'

Sam Blanton receives Eagle Scout Award.

tian Service Organization scholarships for students with Christian vocational majors, special church scholarships for general students, and Lutz-Yelton scholarships for graduating high school seniors.

Dr. Wayne Stacy served as interim pastor at First Baptist Church (1996-1997) while he was Dean of the M. Christopher White School of Divinity, and Dr. Robert Canoy was pastor (1997-2000) and left to become the School of Divinity's Associate Dean and later was installed as the Dean in 2007.

Dawn Anthony, deacon, greets Gardner-Webb students.

Many, many teachers, coaches, and other employees, as well as students, of Gardner-Webb are active participating members of First Baptist Church. The current president of Gardner-Webb, Dr. Frank Bonner, is a deacon and teaches a Sunday school class at First Baptist Church.

Some Gardner-Webb students have served as interns at the church. The church feeds the university football team once a year and some church groups "adopt" college students to pray for and assist as needed.

Gardner-Webb is a mission field for First Baptist Church. First Baptist people are a blessing to the university, and the people of the university are a blessing to First Baptist Church.

Boy Scouts

The first Boy Scout troop in Cleveland County was chartered in 1923 and sponsored by First Presbyterian Church of Shelby. The second troop was at First Baptist Church of Shelby and was organized in 1927 with Henry Edwards as scoutmaster and Dr. Hubert Plaster as assistant. It was Troop No. 2 when organized but was re-registered as Troop 101 in 1961.

The scouts built a log cabin on the McKinney Farm that served them for years. Next they used a metal building where the

Scout Master Don Costner on the trail with scouts

child care center playground is now located. When the church acquired the Clyde Short Building where the activities building is now located, the scouts used it for a while. For a while the scouts met in the church basement. When the church acquired the car wash property across Washington Street from the activities building, the scouts moved there and have been there ever since.

The first church history listed those who served as scout masters through 1969, and the list included two present members, Harold Causby and Charlie Horn. Since then, the troop has been led by Gerald Osborne, Alfred Bridges, Max Dover, Jr., Joseph Allen, Tim Ellis, Hugh "Buck" Walker, and Don Costner. Al Hansen is the current Scout Master. The scout program was dropped in 1979 but revived in 1984.

Troop 101 has almost become a family affair for the Costners. Elbert Costner worked with the scouts 28 years, as assistant scout master, scoutmaster, and on the Piedmont Council. Elbert's son Don Costner was scoutmaster for 14 years, and Don's son Jay was an Eagle Scout. Elbert's son Steve Costner was an Eagle Scout, and both of Steve's sons, Bert and Chris, were Eagle Scouts.

Scouts in Troop 101 are recognized in Sunday worship services in February and in July.

Boy Scouts visit the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, NC

Boy Scout Troop 2/101

Eagle Scouts

1927	Oakland Morrison
1927	Edward Washburn
1928	George Blanton, Jr.
1928	John Lineberger
1928	Sherrill Lineberger
1928	Zeno Wall, Jr.
1928	Charles Switzer
1930	Alfred Eskridge
1931	Mal Spangler
1932	J. Malcom Wallace
1935	Rush Hamrick, Jr.
1935	Edwin Spangler
1937	Bobby Frazier
1937	Avery McMurry
1954	Ronald Carpenter
1955	Ben Gilliatt
1960	Steve Costner
1961	Teddy Booker
1961	Harry Ramsey
1961	Vance Suttle
1962	Randy Cook
1962	Max C. Daves, Jr.
1962	C. Rush Hamrick, III
1962	Bryan Wilder
1963	Jimmy Swift
1966	Charles P. Swift
1971	Michael T. Bridges
1973	Edward Cash
1974	Kenneth Appling
1976	David Wright
1986	Michael Strong
1988	David Brown
1988	Billy Cullum
1988	Shawn Millsaps
1988	Bryan Royster
1988	Travis Walker
1989	Tyler Hall
1989	Brad McKee
1989	Clay Cabiness
1990	Tom Barker
1990	Tony Park
1991	Jason Myers
1991	Joe Rempson
1991	Michael Crowder
1991	Chris Dixon
1992	Tim Whitaker
1992	Bert Costner
1992	Joe Johnson
1992	Jason Walker
1992	Chris Callahan
1992	Matt Barker
1992	Tracey McKinnon
1993	Eddie Rempson
1993	John Wright

1993	Matt Shivers
1994	Jay Costner
1994	Jeremy Piercy
1994	Jason Cloninger
1994	Spencer Bordes
1995	Tommy Turpish
1995	Andrew Barker
1996	Matt Borders
1996	Garrett Connor
1996	Chip Carothers
1996	Joseph Randall
1997	Cameron Crawford
1997	Ben Travis
1998	Mark Costner
1999	Tripp Beam
1999	Chris Costner
1999	Brian Wilson
1999	Steven Barker
2000	Kelly Hendrick
2000	Chris Frye
2001	Brent Merritt
2002	Craig Gosnell
2002	Andrew Hess
2002	Chase Walker
2002	Patrick Marshall
2003	Josh Trivett
2003	Michael Bacigaulpo
2004	Thomas Millsaps
2004	Matt Curtis
2004	Zach Day
2005	John Reuscher
2005	Matt Gehring
2005	Matt Kiser
2005	Carson Putman
2005	Tyler Suggs
2006	Clayton McSwain
2006	John Curry
2006	Marcus Perry
2006	Daniel Bacigalupo
2007	Tyler Triplett
2007	Caleb Webb
2007	Sam Blanton

Phyllis Wortman: My mother, Marian Butler, was our Girl Scout leader during the 1961-62 school years. We were Troop No. 240 and met on Tuesdays on the third floor of the education building. We enjoyed field trips, worked on merit badges, and sold Girl Scout Cookies door-to-door. It was a wonderful experience and the church was most supportive.

Cub Scouts

Cub Scout Pack 101 at First Baptist Church has been headed through the years by Harold Smith, William Marsh, Bill Green, George Adams, Jr., David Lane, David Duncan, Ed Minor, Bud McSwain, Thomas Rempson, David Barker, Robert Callahan, Marcus Tuttle, Bryan Trivett, Doug Williams, Al Hansen, and in 2007, Reggie Buchanan. Don Wilson assists with Bears and Perry Price with Webelos. Dot Cash worked with the Cub Scouts for 35 years. In 2007 the pack has 40 Cubs and meets weekly.

Pack activities have included sleeping with the sharks in Gatlinburg; space camp in Huntsville, Alabama: sleeping on the U.S.S. Yorktown aircraft carrier in Charleston; sleeping in the cabin of the Smokey Mountain Train Ride; sleeping with the animals at the Columbia Zoo; and sleeping at a camp over at the Kennedy Space Center.

The pack has received the Quality Unit Award, the National Summertime Award, and the Good Turns for America Award for community service.

Cub Pack 101 is recognized in First Baptist Church worship services every February.

Girl Scouts

The Girl Scouts were organized at First Baptist Church in 1944 and chartered in 1945. They were very active until the early 1960's, but were then discontinued as a church program. In 1978 Becca Causby and the church started Brownie Girl Scout Troop 320, and that troop continued until 1986 when it too was discontinued. The program was revived in 2001, but it lasted less than a year. Each time the program was discontinued it was for lack of area leadership. As of 2007, the church has no Girl Scout program.

Television Ministry

In 1969 Floyd Williams had begun Shelby's local cablevision business and wanted to get a local church on the air. Gene Watterson came to town in July of that year, and Floyd decided that Rev. Watterson and First Baptist Church were the ones to put on television. Floyd did the wiring and technical work to make the broadcasts possible, and Eugene Allen lent a black and white camera and recorder and even some tapes each weekend. Ken Crawley was the first cameraman.

The routine in those early days was for Gene Allen to lend his equipment to Shelby Cablevision on Friday; Floyd Williams would set it up at the church; Don Allen would go to the cablevision office on Sunday morning and throw a switch, putting the church on the air; Ken Crawley would man the borrowed camera during the morning worship service. After the service, Don Allen would throw the switch off, and Shelby Cablevision would return the camera and recorder to Gene Allen on Monday morning.

Al Whatley operates television camera.

David Grose came to town in 1978 and helped the church acquire two color cameras to replace the old black and white one that the church owned at that time. One camera was on the balcony and one in the booth over the piano. David was the camera operator and cut in the camera that was appropriate.

Around 1983 or so, the church acquired more sophisticated equipment and put an additional camera in the side room of the sanctuary. Dave Grose and Al Whatley were the camera operators, assisted by Bob Borders and Chris Horne.

The system was upgraded in 2004-2005. Equipment was moved to the present control room partly because the old control room leaked during a hard rain. The current equipment is digital and a four camera system is used in the sanctuary.

When Time Warner Cable took over Shelby Cablevision in the late 90's, Floyd Williams helped the church get a commitment from Time Warner so the church could stay on the air. As of 2007 the church's television ministry has been continually on the air for 38 years. That may be a record for this part of the country.

Larry Baker and Al Whatley at television controls

Eugene Allen was not a member of the church when he started lending the church the television camera, but he and his wife joined shortly after. Floyd Williams was not a member of the church at any time, but it was his determination and help that made our television ministry possible. Tim

Wes Westmoreland: I researched the television ministry for our new history, and it is quite clear, even though Floyd Williams gives credit to others, that it was his commitment to making this happen that allowed FBC to have an early and viable television ministry that has been positive for the entire community.

David Grose: Many times in the 80's rain would pour into the control room from the leaky roof of the church. I would funnel the water into trash cans and operate the equipment with a sheet of plastic over my head. I remember at least two occasions when snow and ice caused worship services to be cancelled. On both occasions, Dr. Watterson and I managed to get to the church and get him on television, speaking on a microphone to an empty church. Our church's ministry was so early that many other churches and other counties came to us for advice.

Al Whatley: Just after Tony Tench became our pastor, I was taping his evening sermon over a tape that had been used previously to tape an old sermon of Dr. Canoy. When the time came to go on the air, I started the tape and promptly fell asleep. I was awakened by a call from my mother who was watching from home. While I slept, Tony finished his taped sermon and Dr. Canoy's old sermon took up. My mother never let me live that down. To be a part of this ministry is a blessing. We serve because we feel led to do so. What we do may just be the only church someone else has.

Technology team at work

Warner, another non-member, comes whenever technical help is needed.

Al Whatley and Dan Phillips are presently the mainstays, with Larry Baker, Brett Collins, and Greg Eaves as able engineers. The Tech team includes faithful servants who rotate the duties at the controls, the sound boards and behind the cameras such as Chris Horn, Bob Borders, David Grose, June Yarboro, Mark and Ben Green, Bob Watson, James and Evan Smith, Floyd and Ian Rose, Liz Berkebile, Nick Cole, Sam Blanton, and Jim Higgins.

The present equipment has enormous untouched possibilities, so the church crew hopes to eventually be able to broadcast live from Webb Chapel and from the gym where the First Worship originates.

Senior Adults Have Fun

The senior adult members of First Baptist Church have served the Lord and the church through the years. Upon reaching retirement age, they have time to enjoy each other. Initially, they met for lunch once a month and went on an occasional trip. Some of the trips were day trips and some lasted a week. Eventually, the day trips replaced the monthly luncheons, and there were usually longer trips a couple of times per year.

Senior Adults at Lazy 5 Ranch

The Keenagers Club was started in the early 1970's. It became the 55 Plus Club in the late 1990's, and became the Sonshiners in 2002.

Senior Adults enjoy outing.

The trip organizer in the early years was activities director Glenn Davenport, assisted by member Clara Angel. When Clara Angel died, Janice and Demar Boyles began working on the trips with Glenn. By the time Glenn left the church, Janice and Demar were old hands at planning and directing trips and they did this for several years. When Demar died, Evelyn and J. A. West joined Janice in planning trips. Perry Holleman became Minister of Education in 2001, and eventually he has been the one to plan and direct trips. Over the years our senior adults have traveled to places like Canada, Chattanooga, and Nashville, Epcot Center and Disney World, the World's Fair in Knoxville, Baltimore and Annapolis, the CNN World of Coca Cola in Georgia, Branson and Eureka Springs, the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, and Philadelphia, Boston, Cape Cod and Newport, Niagra Falls, Charleston and Savannah, Pigeon Forge, The Barter Theater, Warm Springs, and the Calloway Gardens.

They have taken day trips to Chinquapin Plantation, Flatrock Playhouse, The Carl Sandburg House, frescoes in churches at West Jefferson and Glendale Springs, the Great Smokey Mountain Railway, Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, Hollywild Zoo in Spartanburg, Christmas at Myrtle Beach, Lake Lure for dinner and tour, Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens and the Schiele Museum in Gastonia.

Senior Adults on tour of Lake Lure

Eddie Ramsaur: We were on a church bus trip on September 11, 2001, and had spent the night near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. When we left our motel rooms to get on the bus, it had a flat tire. We went back to our rooms and turned on the television. There we learned that terrorists had crashed airplanes into the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon in Washington. Another plane, probably headed for the White House, had crashed in Pennsylvania near us, apparently made to crash through the efforts of courageous passengers trying to stop the terrorists. The church called us while we were at the Hershey Candy Factory and asked if we planned to continue our trip. Apparently the folks back home were worried about us. We voted to continue our trip to the Amish country and Philadelphia. The Liberty Bell and other tourist attractions were heavily guarded, but we got to see them. I'll never forget that trip.

Betty Ramsaur: I remember seeing the Amish country on that trip and the production of "Noah" at the Sound and Light Theater.

Janice Boyles: J. A. West almost killed me on the way back from that trip. He and Edna Allen were leading the singing when Jackie Millsaps suddenly had to put on the brakes. J. A. did a backflip over me as I sat on the steps leading down to the door of the bus.

Evelyn West: On those trips we sang songs, played bingo, told jokes. Frances Webb used to tell jokes. When we stopped to eat, J. A. always knew it was time to leave when Frances finished eating. She was always last in the eating department.

Janice Boyles: The old bus gave us problems. Sometimes we had to get a running start to get up the hills. We were likely to lose our heat, air, battery power without warning!

Doris Palmer: When we went to Mobile, Alabama, it was like Mardi Gras. Bill was dressed like a king. Everybody had beads. Harold and Nelson Causby danced and carried on.

Frances Houser: Our most embarrassing trip was to see "Maggie Gets Married" at Flat Rock. It was supposed to be a family comedy, so the Tenches went with us and so did the daughter of our new music minister. It turned out to be raunchy, and J. A. apologized for arranging such a trip.

Avery McMurray, Frances Houser, Eddie Ramsaur: On the trip to Chattanooga we saw the Aquarium, The Truck Museum, and The Replica of Columbus' ship.

Perry Holleman: Our programs for our monthly meetings were sometimes quite good. I remember the holocaust survivor, the 9/11 survivor, and the Dennis the Menace cartoonist from Charlotte. He drew some Dennis cartoons and signed them for us.

Randall Davis: One of our best trips was when we went to Boston, visited the Concord and Lexington Battlegrounds, toured Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard. In Newport, RI, we saw some homes of the rich and famous.

Sunshiners aboard the Branson Belle

Senior Adults waiting for cruise in Branson, Missouri

Day trips to Charlotte included the Rameses exhibit, the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Southern Christmas Show, processing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child at Boone and Charlotte, Southern Women's Show, Discovery Place, and the Southern Spring Show.

Church events and trips included the seniors' convention in Atlanta, the Passion Play at Spartanburg, the Senior Adults' Festival in Greensboro, the Passion Play in Atlanta, retreats at Ridgecrest and Caraway, the Billy Graham Training Center at the Cove, the Twin Singing Christmas Trees in Spartanburg, and the lights at Tanglewood.

Red Hat Senior Adults at Pisgah Inn

Education Minister Perry Holleman introduced mystery trips, where nobody knew the destination except him and possibly the driver. Those trips turned out to be to the Lazy 5 Ranch, Emerald Village, "Mayberry" in Mount Airy, Catawba Queen on Lake Norman, the Reed Gold Mine, Linville Caverns, and Mystery Hill.

This is only a partial list of the fun places where the seniors have gone in the past, and are a mere prelude to the fun trips they will go on in the future.

Golden Years Honor Roll

According to church records, over 200 present-day members of First Baptist Church joined 50 or more years ago.

First row: Bobby Eskridge (1946), Jean Eskridge (1944), Mary Ella Blanton (1932), Mary Sue Olsen (1932), Gaither Edney (1953), Fidelia Edney (1953), Virginia Bost (1934)

Second row: Don Allen (1954), Hazel Allen (1943), Janelle Barrick (1939), John Kendrick (1932), Rush Hamrick, Jr. (1930), Robert Lutz (1934), Helen Byrd (1944)

Third Row: Robert Litton (1941), Margaret Litton (1941), Dean Garver (1942), Leon Harris (1940), Zeb Beam, Jr. (1934), Mary D. Beam (1947), Avery McMurry (1930), Mary Margaret Shehan (1928)

First row: Lois Leath (1950), Hoyle Davis (1947), Blanche Davis (1947), Connie Young (1949), Becky Hamrick (1948), Glenn Wall (1943), Kathryn Wall (1948)
Second row: Susie Lowe (1949), Polly Ellis(1950), Sue Greene (1948), Alta Pernell (1950), Elaine Siceloff (1946), Carolyn McCraw (1959), Keith McCraw (1945), Dot Robertson (1952)
Third row: Ruth Sherman (1945), Margie Senn (1944), Stough Wray (1949), Lee Gilliatt (1946), Jane Shields (1943), Don Shields (1943), Charlie Robertson (1944), Elbert Costner (1947)

First row: Jacky Stone (1952), Francis Runyans (1955), Herman Best (1953), Margaret Best (1953), Cavelle Wilder (1952), Russell Davis (1950), Mildred Keeter Davis (1950), Doris Palmer (1952)
Second row: J. A. West (1950), Evelyn West (1950), Janice Boyles (1955), Montrose Ballard (1955), Bob McMurry (1952), Margaret McMurry (1952), Harold Causby (1949), Polly Causby (1955), Mike Southard (1952)
Third row: Claude Lawing (1955), Betty Lawing (1955), Bea Allen (1952), Mary Lou Davis (1954), Irene Padgett (1954), Mary Crawley (1952), Art Moss (1951), Lynn Moss (1952), Hill Hudson III (1952)

First row: Keith Hartley (1954), Becky Hartley (1954), Freida Bryson (1954), Hale Bryson (1954)
Second row: Rodney Brown (1956), Marsha Brown (1957), Jo Ann Surratt (1957), Norman Bridges (1954), Betty Bridges (1954)
Third row: Mac Wells (1953), Blake McWhirter (1955), Melba McWhirther (1957), Lewis Cantrell (1957), Doris Cantrell (1957), Robert Jones (1957), Mabel Jones (1957)

First row: Adelaide Austell Craver (1952), Dorothy Shytle (1953), Rachel Spangler Schenck (1929), Jacqueline Hughes (1953), Sue Hudson (1943), Eloise Young Spangler (1928)

Second row: Webb Cabiness (1956), Nancy Lucas (1957), Ed Young (1951), Kate Young (1951), Anna Lee Wilson Griffin (1940)

Third row: John C. Hamrick, Jr. (1949), Jim Horn (1944), Jack Hendricks (1944), Joe Hendricks (1937), Don Wilson (1946)

Honor roll members not pictured:

Marjorie Allen (1951), Ruth Anderson (1955), Irvin Anthony, Jr. (1954), Margaret Anthony (1951), Louise Bissette (1952), Hazel Blanton (1931), Mary Lee Borders (1945), Gene Branton (1937), Jean Branton (1950), Virginia Bridges (1948), Ruby Bruce (1931), Azalea Brydges (1935), Maude Burrus (1942), Max Butler (1956), Marion Butler (1956), Joe E. Cabiness (1956), Norma Cabaniss (1956), Helen Canipe (1957), Dot Cash (1955), Jacqueline Caudill (1952), Martha Cook (1945), Christine Cooke (1951), Leona Costner (1957), Vera Cunningham (1954), Joe DePriest (1952), Mary Alice Eaves (1955), Amelia Eskridge (1937), Leland Stanford Eskridge (1934), Emily Gardner (1937), Lorraine Gardner (1957), Jewell Greene (1950), Ann Hamrick (1938), Lorene Hamrick (1955), Ruth Hill (1953), Neil Holcomb (1945), Russell Hord (1946), Charles Horn (1955), Hubert Hoyle (1952), Mozell Ingle (1943), Margaret Jay (1944), H. S. Keeter (1937), Betty Kendrick (1951), Bertha Lee (1950), Joyce Lee (1944), Doris Lowrance (1955), Carolyn Lutz (1942), Charles Magness (1953), Carl Martin (1949), Evangeline Mathers (1948), Francis McCurry (1948), Marvin McDaniel (1957), Mary Mintz (1955), Clint Newton (1934), Carolyn Nieves (1956), Velle Packard (1949), Aubrey Pernell (1950), Robert Phifer (1955), Patsy Phifer (1938), Nancy Phillips (1953), Alja Price (1949), Frank Putnam (1954), Doris Putnam (1954), Eddie Ramsaur (1955), Betty Ramsaur (1955), Mildred Ramsey (1939), Deanne Robertson (1940), Ernest Rogers (1954), Arzie Rogers (1954), Howard Rollins (1939), June Rollins (1939), Eliza Ross (1953), Stephen Royster (1937), Betty Royster (1949), Grace Sheppard (1953), Mary Sheppard (1957), Stanley Sherman (1952), Charles Shytle (1953), Jean Sisk (1956), Agnes Smith (1949), Al Spangler (1956), Elaine Spangler (1930), Ethel Spangler (1936), Evelyn Spangler (1951), Olan Speagle (1951), Charles Spurling (1953), Horace Steadman (1951), Vance Suttle (1956), Linton Suttle (1957), Mary Sue Thompson (1935), Hubert Triplett (1954), Catherine Walker (1934), Nell Watson (1956), Betty Weaver (1940), Francis Webb (1954), Aurthine Wells (1937), Guy Whitmire (1955), Rosa Whitmire (1955), Harriett Wilson (1953), Margaret Wood (1955), Kitty Wray (1951), Don Yelton (1954), Evelyn Yelton (1945), Fields Young III (1951), Thomas Young (1954)

FBC Members Honored for a Reason

There are undoubtedly many members of First Baptist Church who could and should be honored for service to the Lord and to the church, but the church newsletter 1970-2006 only reported these:

In 1975 the church was first in the state in designated giving, second in giving to the Cooperative Program, in the top ten in baptisms and additions to the church, and in the top 15 in church growth. In 1976-1977-1978 the WMU got the highest awards available. They were presented at the WMU 100th Anniversary celebration in Richmond, VA. In 1985 the church gave more to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering than any other church in the state. In 1978 the church gave $264,586 to missions, the second highest in the state. From 1973 through 1993 Yvonne Watterson coached the church's Junior Department Bible Drill kids to state honors, and in 1995 the State Bible Drill brought 300 children to compete at First Baptist Church. In 1972 Carrie Wacaster was honored at the state WMU convention for 51 years of service to WMU, and in 1986 she was presented with a painting in which she appears as the state's WMU representative at its 100th anniversary celebration. In 1985 the church's daycare program was honored by the Baptist Women's Conference.

In our most recent history First Baptist Church has been recognized for the following:

- 1998 Top 10 in per member giving through the NC State Mission Offering
- 1998 Top 10 in Total dollars given through NC State Mission Offering
- 1999 Top 10 in Total dollars given through the NC State Mission Offering
- 2000 Top 10 in Total dollars given through the NC State Mission Offering
- 2004 #17 in Total Cooperative Program Giving of all 4000+ churches in NC
- 2007 #13 in Total Cooperative Program Giving of all 4000+ churches in NC

The church newsletter reported long time service of many teachers, including Paul Wilson (50 years in 1982), Fred Swift (32 years with fourth grade boys in 1987), George Byrd (50 years in 1990), Inez Connor (50 years in 1997), and Ann Pharr (26 years at Child Care Center in 2002), Bill Wilder (50+ years) and Ralph Sullivan (10 years).

Gene Watterson was given an honorary doctors degree by Gardner-Webb University in 1974. He served two successive terms as President of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in 1989 and 1990.

Carlos Young served as Second-Vice President of North Carolina Baptist Convention in 1970-71.

In 1981 Linda Kelly was the first woman to be ordained by First Baptist Church as a minister. Pat Fletcher was the second in 2000. In 1996 Becky

Carlos Young (far right) with 1970-71 Baptist State Convention officers.

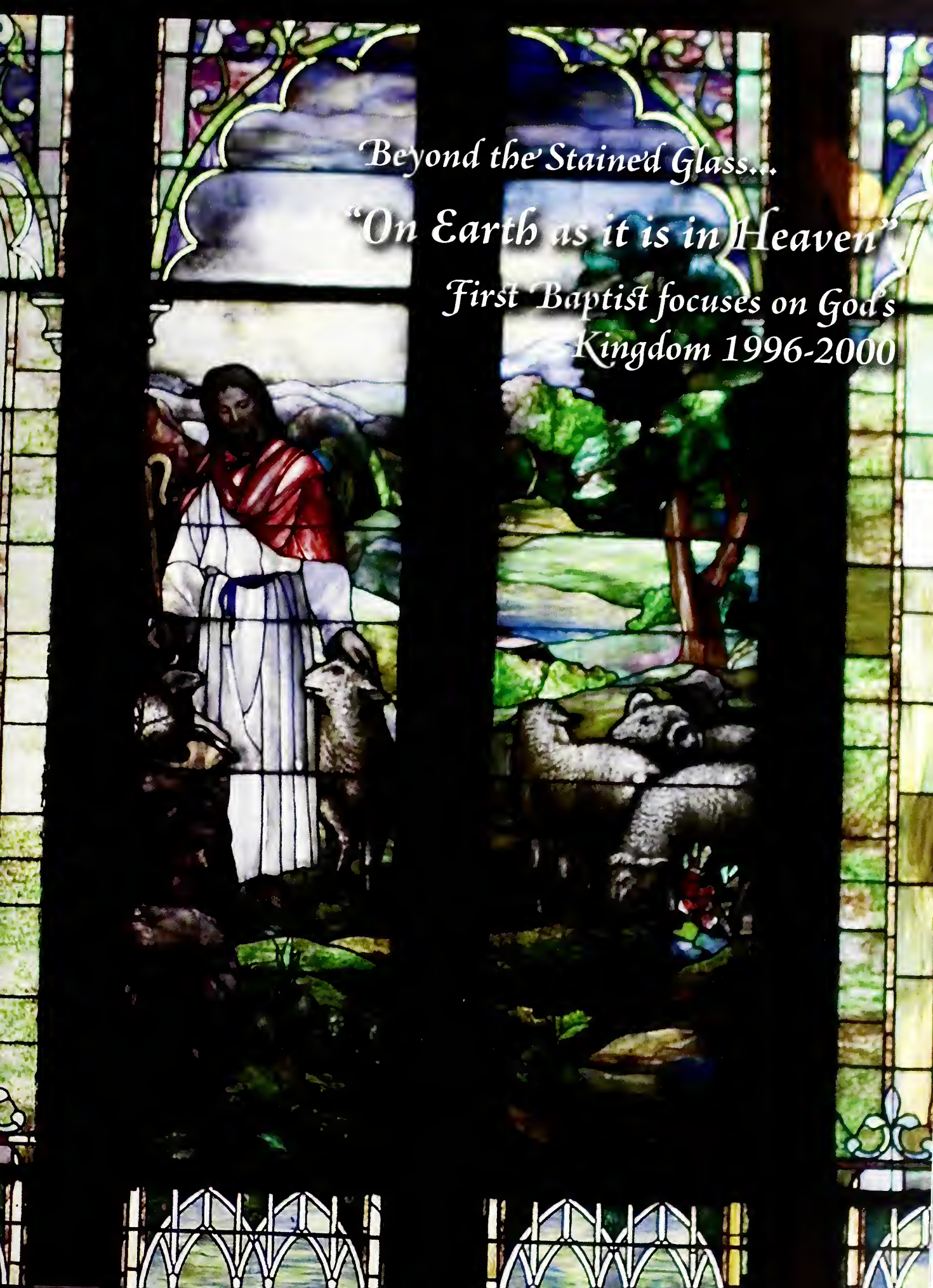
Hamrick was the first woman to serve as chair of Deacons. Harold Causby was named the 1983 Layman of the Year by the North Carolina Baptist Men.

In 1975 perfect attendance in Sunday School was recognized for Hubbard Hamrick (38 years), Roscoe Morgan (30 years), Elbert Costner (26 years), and Boyce Freeman (26 years). As of 2007 Elbert Costner has completed 58 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School.

Church honors Ralph Sullivan for dedicated work in Sunday School.

Gingko trees were planted in front of the church to honor members who died in World War II. By 1998 so many had died that they were replaced with Columnar Maples as a gift from the Warrick family.

Length of service for staff members reported in the church newsletter included Dr Zeno Wall (23 years), John Lawrence (10 years), Dr. Gene Watterson (26 years), Roland Leath (23 years), Billy Cooper (10 years), Glenn Davenport (23 years), Bob Dills (21 years), Betty Dinkler (11 years), Mary Sue Thompson (32 years), Brenda Blevins (16 years), Mrs. Hubert Plaster (50 years), Jeri Ledford (25 years), Emily Monroe (10 years), and Dianne Travis (25 years).



Beyond the Stained Glass...

"On Earth as it is in Heaven"

First Baptist focuses on God's Kingdom 1996-2000

"On Earth as it is in Heaven"

First Baptist focuses on God's Kingdom 1996-2000

When Dr. Watterson retired, the church called Dr. Wayne Stacy as interim pastor. He served from 1996 to 1997 when Dr. Robert Canoy was called as pastor.

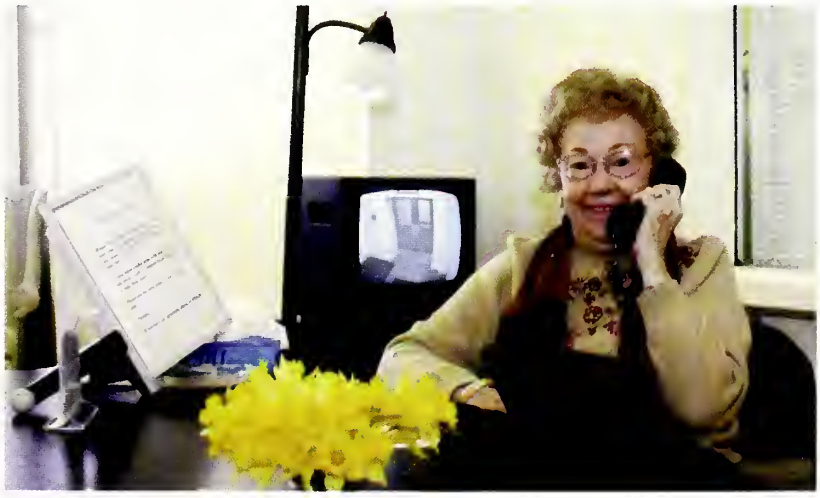
Dr. Wayne Stacy

Dr. Stacy graduated from Palm Beach Atlantic College in 1974 and received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979. He has taught religion and philosophy at Palm Beach Atlantic College, New Testament at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and religious studies at Gardner-Webb University. Dr. Stacy was Dean of the M. Christopher White School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb while serving First Baptist as "Pastor in the Interim."

Dr. Wayne Stacy

He pastored a church during his student years, was senior minister of a church in Florida for several years, and pastored First Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC, for four years. He has served the Baptist denomination as Bible study leader, revival speaker, convocation speaker, and in many other ways. He has published numerous articles in religious publications.

Dr. Stacy's scholarship and experience proved to be very valuable as he led First Baptist Church during a time when the ministerial staff was in transition and lay leaders needed help to get through this period. Our system of volunteer receptionists that puts a voice and a face on the church to callers and visitors was started at his prompting.



Lola Humphries serves as receptionist.

Dr. Robert Canoy: During my first graveside service, a long loud freight train came roaring by the cemetery, making it necessary for us to stop proceedings until the train was gone. I remember Robert Lutz always extending a hand full of candy, but never allowing me to take more than one piece. I was trying to keep spirits light on our return trip from the Holy Land, when Jenny Lowery said, "I am not interested in your levity!" I remember Joe McWhirter interrupting my preaching one Sunday morning. After the service, he and I walked out of the church arm-in-arm. I enjoyed food and fellowship with the Lois Leath WMU group, Don Allen's homemade ice cream, and Skip Warrick's barbecue. I started my preaching at First Baptist Church with the themes found in the Sermon on the Mount and sensed the congregation's commitment to follow God's will "on earth as it is he heaven" *(Matthew 6:10c). I was delighted to find our people shared my love of Bible study as we studied Mark, John, and Revelation.

J.A. West: Dr. Canoy was young, handsome, and brilliant. Nobody was surprised when he ended up as Dean of the divinity school at Gardner-Webb. We thank him for his service to our church and for bringing Tony Tench to us, first as our Minister of Education and Missions and then as our pastor to succeed Dr. Canoy.

**This phrase from the Lord's Prayer has become a permanent part of the welcoming statement to new members.*

Dr. Canoy came to Shelby in 1997, the year that Shelby FBC celebrated its 150th Anniversary. Events for the celebration were planned by a committee of Mary Lou Causby, historian, and Ginny Spears, Jackie Davis, Rush Hamrick, Jr. and Dick Kelly. The event included "dinner on Lafayette Street" with some members dressed in clothing from that period 1847.

Dr. Robert Canoy

Dr. Robert Canoy

Dr. Canoy, originally from Greenville, Mississippi, received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Mississippi College in 1980, his Master of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1983, and his Doctorate of Philosophy and Christian Theology degree from the same seminary in 1987. He was student pastor of Blue River Island Baptist Church from 1981 to 1987; senior minister at Ashworth Road Baptist Church, West Des Moines, Iowa, from 1989 to 1994; senior minister of First Baptist Church of Rockville, Maryland, from 1994 until 1997, when he came to First Baptist Church of Shelby, NC. He served First Baptist Church until 2000 when he accepted the position of Associate Dean at Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity.

He has taught both the Old and New Testaments with a concentration in New Testament theology. He has written and published materials on various books of the Bible and how to teach them. Currently he is Dean of the School of Divinity and Professor of Christian Theology at Gardner-Webb, and he still serves as interim pastor for area churches from time to time as the Lord directs.

It was Dr. Canoy who led the church to designate all senior staff people as ministers, and those who were not already ordained were ordained by First Baptist Church.

Tony Tench served as Minister of Education and Missions under Dr. Canoy and eventually succeeded him as pastor in 2000. Eric Shamblin served as Minister of Youth and Activities until 1998 and was succeeded by Carol Ann Hoard that year. Pat Fletcher became Minister of Weekday Ministries and Children, and Robert Dimmick became Minister of Administration. Bob Dills continued his 21 years as Minister of Music.

Dr. Canoy was a teacher even when he preached, and he blessed the church with courses on various books of the Bible.

Sermon Survey

In 1998 Dr. Robert Canoy suggested that a survey of church

members be made to see what elements of a sermon they valued the most. Of the 339 survey forms that were returned, members indicated they most valued storytelling (13%), personal illustrations (17%), humor (15%), academic thought (9%), Bible history (18%), and Bible application (28%).

Ministerial Staffs 1996-2000

Dr. Wayne Stacy was Interim Pastor 1996 – 1997 and found these ministers serving the church: Steve Zimmerman as Director of Education, Glenn Davenport as Director of Adults and Activities, Bob Dills as Music Director, Peter West as Youth Director, Betty Denkler as Child Care Center Director, and Archie Mathis as Business Manager. Eric Shamblin 1997 – 1998 succeeded Peter West as Director of Youth and Activities.

Robert Canoy was Pastor from 1997 until 2000. When he came to Shelby, Glenn Davenport was Director of Adults and Activities, Bob Dills served as Music Director, Eric Shamblin was Youth Director, Betty Denkler was Director of the Child Care Center, and Archie Mathis was Business Manager. Tony Tench succeeded Steve Zimmerman as Minister of Education and Missions and served from 1998 until he became Pastor in 2000. Carol Ann Hoard became Minister of Students and Activities succeeding Eric Shamblin in 1998 and is still serving as of 2007. Debi Harrill succeeded Betty Denkler as Director of the Child Care Center in 1997, and it became Weekday Ministries. She was succeeded by Pat Fletcher as Minister of Weekday Ministries and Children, and she served from 2000 to 2003. Archie Mathis was succeeded by Robert Dimmick in 2000 as Minister of Business Administration.

Staff Ministers of First Baptist Church

Tony Tench came to the church as Minister of Educa-

tion and Missions in 1998. He became Pastor in 2000 and is still serving in that capacity in 2007. His staff consisted of Carol Ann Hoard as Minister of Students and Activities, Robert Dimmick as Minister of Administration, and Pat Fletcher as Minister of Children. Bob Dills, who retired in 2000, was succeeded by Andy Roby as Minister of Music in 2001. Perry Holleman became Minister of Education in 2001. Both men are still serving in those positions in 2007.

The team of ordained ministers serving First Baptist Church of Shelby in 2007 when this second history goes to press is as follows:

Pastor ..... Rev. Tony Tench
Minister of Students and Activities ..... Rev. Carol Ann Hoard
Minister of Music ..... Dr. Andy Roby
Minister of Education ..... Rev. Perry Holleman

But the larger ministerial team is the 1157 members who are the Body of Christ known as First Baptist Church in Shelby.

Business Administrators

Archie Mathis

A First Baptist Church member, Ken Crawley, was employed in 1976 to serve on a part-time basis as church business administrator. He was to handle purchasing, personnel management, food services, building maintenance, and budget management. He introduced the use of purchase orders, instituted a bid system, arranged for offering envelopes to be mailed to members directly from the publisher, and instituted a maintenance contract. He served until 1980.

Archie Mathis, a member of First Baptist Church and a retired business man, was employed as church business manager in 1996. He was placed in charge of church finances, church computers, maintenance of buildings and grounds, record keeping, personnel supervision, security, and food service, among other things. He worked with the Constitution and By-laws Committee to update and revise all the by-laws to create the First Baptist Church policy manual. He served until 2000.

Robert Dimmick was called as Minister of Administration in 2000. He was a Certified Public Accountant and also had a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He had served as a hospital chaplain, a business administrator in an Oklahoma public works department, and had retired from the U. S. Army Reserve as a Major with 20 years of active reserve service. He took over all the duties that Archie Mathis had been performing and served as Minister of Administration until 2002. Robert was a willing Bible teacher and preacher who led divorce care groups and couple's retreats for the congregation.

Robert Dimmick

When Robert Dimmick resigned, it was decided to divide his duties between two long-time members of the support staff, Dianne Travis and Gail Adams.

Dianne Travis became Ministry Coordinator. In this capacity she as-

sists the pastor and other ministers, works with church committees, assists the deacons as needed, supervises publications, manages the computer system, and sees that all clerical needs are met.

Gail Adams became Administrative Coordinator. As such, she is in charge of financial services. She supervises building care, food service, and personnel. She works with church committees in all of these areas.

Women Ordained as Ministers by FBC

Linda Kelly

Linda Kelly

The first woman to be ordained as a minister by First Baptist Church was Linda Kelly, daughter of Dick and Ethel Marie Kelly. She grew up in First Baptist Church, graduated from Shelby High School and got an accounting degree from Wake Forest University and a Masters of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. First Baptist Church ordained her as a minister in 1981. She worked as Director of Resident Life at Wake Forest for a couple of years and in 1983 began her pastoral career in a Methodist church. She has served eight Methodist churches in North Carolina through the years and as of 2007 is pastor of a Methodist church in Weaverville just north of Asheville. In 1995 she adopted a little Chinese girl, who is now 12 years old and instructed her mother to tell the people at First Baptist Church that she is Chinese and has an ear implant.

Pat Fletcher

Pat Fletcher

Pat Fletcher was called to First Baptist Church as Minister of Children in 2000. She became responsible for Weekday Ministries as well as young children in other church programs. Even though she was a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, she had not been ordained, so the church ordained her as a minister a few months after she came to work. She resigned in 2003.

Note: Carol Ann Hoard, Minister of Students and Activities, was ordained by the Lattimore Baptist Church before coming to serve First Baptist Church.

Statistical Results of Changing Times

First Baptist Church files an annual report with the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association. Among other things, it reports on membership, Sunday School, additions to the church, total receipts, and missions giving. Comparisons through the years might be informative.

In 1970, Gene Watterson's first full year with the church, we had a membership of 2180, a Sunday School enrollment of 1965 with an average attendance of 956, and 129 additions to the church. Church receipts totaled $315,116, and $125,451 of that went to missions.

In 1975 FBC had a membership of 2387, a Sunday School enrollment of 2036 with an average attendance of 962, and 215 additions to the church. Church receipts were $541,372, and $114,341 of that

went to missions.

In 1980 FBC had a membership of 2189, a Sunday School enrollment of 1767 with an average attendance of 797, and 66 additions. Church receipts were $672,756 with $220,831 going to missions.

In 1985 FBC had a membership of 2124, a Sunday School enrollment of 1752 with an average attendance of 862, and 60 additions to the church. Church receipts were $1,281,968 with $262,579 going to missions.

In 1990 church membership was 2015, Sunday School enrollment was 1410 with an average attendance of 620, and there were 64 additions to the church. Church giving was $1,333,234 with $284,188 going to missions.

In 1996 the year that Gene Watterson retired, church membership was 1744, Sunday School enrollment was 1195 with an average attendance of 505 and with 39 additions to the church. Church giving was $1,228,491 with $187,136 going to missions.

Dr. Robert Canoy became pastor in 1997, and church membership was 1733, Sunday School enrollment was 982 with an average attendance of 468. There were 47 additions to the church. Total giving was $2,017,555 with $222,895 going to missions.

In 2000, when Dr. Canoy resigned as pastor and Tony Tench became pastor of FBC, church membership was 1279, Sunday School enrollment was 1051 with an average attendance of 495, and there were 31 additions to the church. Church undesignated receipts were $1,062,009 with $235,510 of that going to missions.

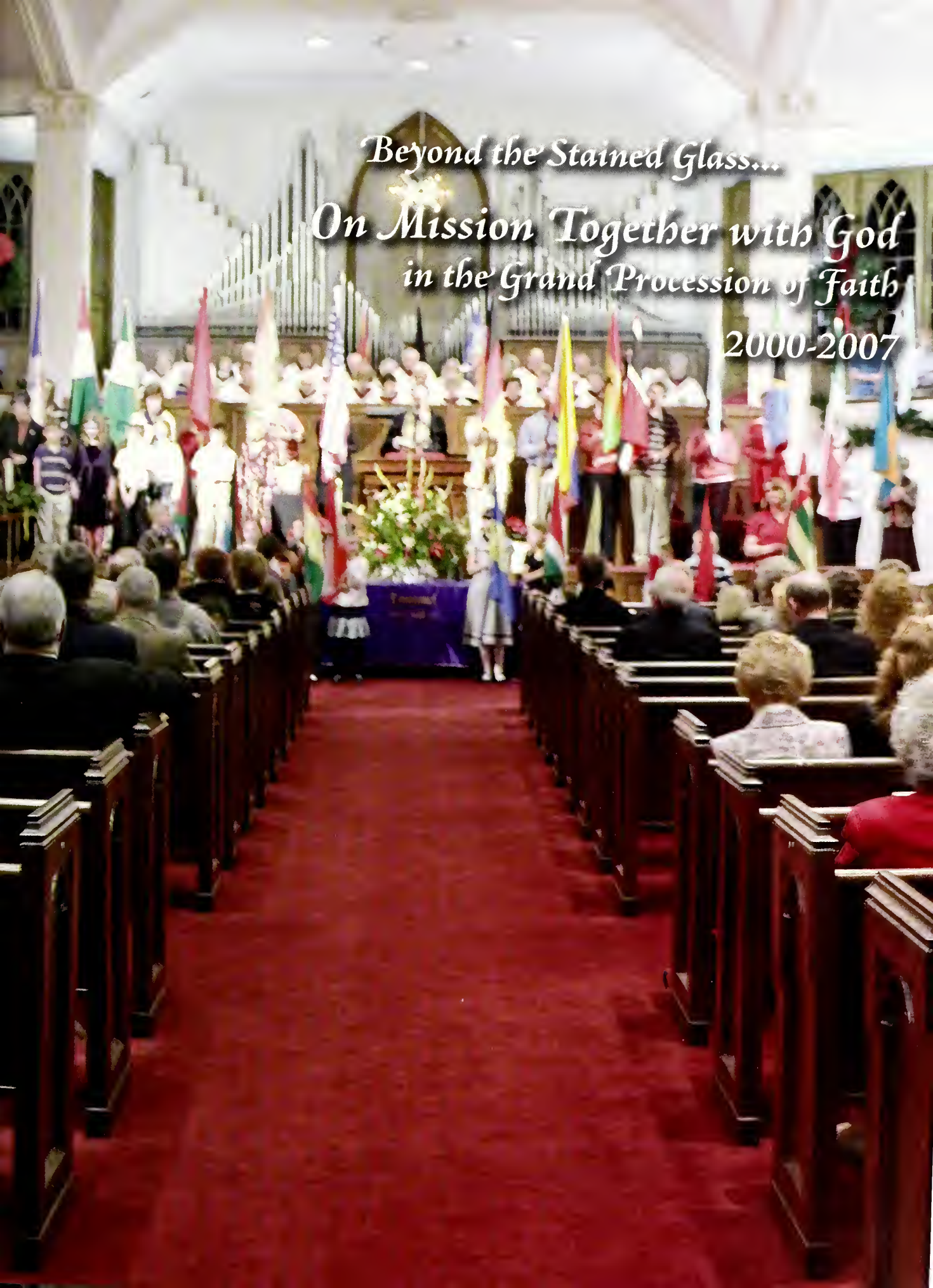
In 2007 as FBC celebrated its 160th anniversary, the total membership was 1180, Sunday School enrollment was 943 with an average attendance of 467, and there were 46 additions to the church. Quarterly, non-duplicating Sunday School attendance was 720. Church undesignated receipts were $1,400,230 and mission giving was $289,737.

Starting in 1989 the records report total membership and also resident membership. Apparently there were people on the membership list who had had no contact with the church for many years. Some had moved out of town or were going to a different church without notifying FBC. In 1990 for example, total membership was 2015 but resident membership was 1728, a difference of 287. That difference was only 79 in 1999 and only 109 in 2006.

Comparing 1970 statistics with 2006 statistics and reducing the total membership and Sunday School enrollment by 300 to allow for non-resident members, it would be fair to say that resident membership was about 1880 in 1970 and 943 in 2006, with average attendance of 956 in 1970 and 467 in 2006. There were 129 additions to the church in 1970 and 46 in 2006. Church contributions totaled $541,372 in 1970 and $1,889,184 in 2006, with $125,451 of that going to missions in 1970 and an estimated $265,700 in 2006.

That means FBC had about 800 fewer members in 2006 than it had in 1970, about 700 fewer enrolled in Sunday School, about 500 fewer attended Sunday School on average, and 83 fewer additions for the year.

On the other hand the church had more than trebled its total giving and almost tripled its giving to missions from 1970 to 2006.



Beyond the Stained Glass...

On Mission Together with God

in the Grand Procession of Faith

2000-2007

On Mission Together with God in the Grand Procession of Faith 2000-2007

Missionary in the Pulpit

Dr. Canoy resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church in 2000, after three years of service in that capacity. In his second year in Shelby, he suggested that his friend, Tony Tench, who had just returned from Malawi where he had served as a missionary would be a good education minister. The search committee interviewed several candidates for the job but eventually agreed with Dr. Canoy's suggestion. By the time Dr. Canoy resigned to become associate Dean at Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity, Tony had made such an impression on the congregation as Minister of Education and Missions that the consensus was that he should be our pastor. The search committee considered various candidates but finally realized that Tony was the choice by acclamation. That was in the year 2000 and he has been pastor of First Baptist Church ever since.

Rev. Tony Tench, 1998-present

Rev. Tony Tench

Tony was born and reared in Bristol, Virginia. He married Janet Ball in 1979 and has a daughter, Erin.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Milligan College in Tennessee in 1981 and a Master of Divinity degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1984. As a college student, he served as summer youth minister at the East Bristol Baptist Church. As a seminary student, he served as a pastor in nursing home ministry for the St. Matthew Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and then as pastoral intern at the Bethany Baptist Church, also in Louisville. As soon as he graduated from seminary, he became Associate Pastor of Education and Youth at the church where he had served as intern. After five years there,

Tony Tench: In a day when church life and ministry is changing with emphasis on new ways to do church, it seems to me there is also a need for focus on what new things God will do through old churches. It is critical that a 160 year old church undergo a revival of purpose, focus again on the New Testament's description of "church." I hold on to these three beliefs: 1 – God has a purpose for our church. 2 – God expects us to be His people in the world. 3 – God desires us to join the grand procession of faith of the larger church into the world that needs a Savior.

he became Pastor of Kuttawa First Baptist Church in Kuttawa, Kentucky, where he served from 1988 to 1992. In September 1992, he and Janet were appointed as missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Their call as missionaries took them to Malawi where they served as church development advisors in Kasungu from 1992 to 1996. Later Tony served as teacher in theological education at Baptist Bible School and Baptist Theological Seminary of Malawi at Lilongwe, Malawi, from 1996 to 1998. He became Minister of Education and Missions at First Baptist, Shelby, on July 1, 1998, and pastor on November 18, 2000.

Mission Statement and Guiding Principles

Within the first months of his service as pastor, Tony led First Baptist to adopt this mission statement:

At First Baptist Church
We believe God is REAL and is ...
...at work advancing His Kingdom
"on Earth as it is in Heaven"
as First Baptist Church,
empowered through prayer,
lifts up the Truth of God's Kingdom by:
***R**eaching people separated from Jesus,*
***E**quipping believers for service,*
***A**pplying God's Word to daily life, &*
***L**oving God and our neighbors.*

Through this process of developing the mission statement, the church, in discussions during joint Sunday School lessons, acknowledged its role as one of the pillars in the community. They looked together at the scripture passage in 1 Timothy 3:15 to help refine this self-understanding: *"You will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth."* With this biblical challenge before them, the church established the following guiding principles to help develop the mission statement – guiding principles that give description of the First Baptist identity in Shelby.

Guiding Principles

These are our core values that represent what we believe about our church and our mission in the world.

1. We cherish our heritage as a pillar of stability and leadership in the faith community of Shelby and Cleveland County, and we value the foundation this heritage lays for our future ministry here.
2. We are sinners saved by grace and committed to sharing the news of this salvation with others in our town, county, state, nation, and around the world.
3. We seek God's will for our lives individually and as a congregation, knowing that He has called us to praise and honor Him and serve others.

4. We support one another with caring hands and prayerful hearts while we welcome and accept new members into our fellowship. We are thankful for the diversity that this fellowship can bring.
5. We believe the Bible is God's Word and is our authority for faith and the living of our lives every day.
6. We know that the work we are about is God's work. That being so, we pray for his direction in all that we face.
7. We expect to experience an energy for life that comes as a result of staying focused on the ways of God and working together to serve Him.
8. We believe that our commitment to God will be evident in our stewardship of money, possessions, time, gifts, and talents given for local, state, national, and international missions.
9. We believe that our young people are our responsibility to nurture and lead into a relationship with Jesus, and we expect to see God call from them the ministers and missionaries of the future.
10. We seek to engage "people groups" with the gospel by planning ministries to reach specific needs and groups. (e.g. TV, Deaf, Childcare, Extension, VBS, Prisoners, Singles, Scouts, etc.)

Tony Tench: We continue to support missionaries around the globe, but we also acknowledge that God is sending us as missionaries. We are a missionary force in Cleveland County, North Carolina, the United States of America, and around the world. For this reason we have adopted specific unreached people groups. We will help carry the gospel to them and pray for them.

In our efforts to carry out the great commission, we partner with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. We will join with other believers outside our Baptist family in order to show the world the love of Christ.

The "Mission Statement" Goes to Work

In the first year Tony was Minister of Education and Missions, he led the church in starting the Greatest Treat Festival. The idea was to reach out to children and others in the neighborhood of the church on Halloween. Games were set up in front of the Boy Scout hut. Those who played and won got candy as prizes. Since then more games were added, they were moved into the gym, and the WMU manned them. After several years other churches wanted to do the same thing. Since 2004 First Baptist and other churches have combined at Halloween to put on the Greatest Treat Festival out at the fairgrounds. Thousands of children and their parents enjoy the games and candy prizes together and listen to what is said about Jesus.

Weekday Ministries at First Baptist Church is mission time for the ministerial staff. During chapel time, the music minister leads the singing

Staff welcomes congregation to a "Country Thang in the City."

and the other ministers take turns telling the Bible story. Parents expect and want this, and the kids have a great time. Bob Dills and Andy Roby have spent many a Wednesday morning with guitar and autoharp respectively leading the children in songs. Perry Holleman along with Carol Ann Hoard and Pastor Tony have "snipped and told" many a Bible story with scissors and paper.

Greatest Treat banner at Cleveland County Fair

Tony is involved in the youth ministry, especially the youth mission trips. He assists the youth minister and enjoys seeing the youth grow as Christians. "They are not just learning to be missionaries," he said, "they are missionaries for the Lord Jesus, sent out by First Baptist Church of Shelby!"

It is no accident that First Baptist Church is mission oriented. Every other year since 2003 the church furnishes the money and manpower to build a house for a family with Habitat for Humanity, and the pastor is in the middle of it. When hurricane Katrina all but destroyed Gulfport, Mississippi, three teams (including the pastor) went down to help the North Carolina Baptist Men rebuild hundreds of houses. The pastor goes with the Sonshiners (older members) to pack Christ-

Tony illustrates the Greatest Treat–Jesus– at Fairgrounds.

mas shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child to ship to needy children all over the world.

When missions offerings come up, the pastor and the WMU make it clear to the congregation that First Baptist Church is a missionary church.

Pastor Tony regularly calls on object lessons to illustrate the themes of sermons. On one occasion he told the story of Jeremiah's visit to the potter and actually broke the pot before the congregation. "They all jumped at once as if one person when they heard the pot crack," he remarked. "I had to really concentrate on my sermon to keep from a chuckle." At other times, he used a mallet and a spike to show the torture of our Lord. The snow globe he concocted during one Advent season was so popular that everyone wanted one – so we bought and sold them to raise money for youth missions. A clip board broken across his knee, a replacement window on a stand, and the actual painting on a

Child Development Center students singing at worship service

Panel of older members reflect: The pastor is known for his innovative "show and tell" preaching, his collection of jokes and stories with a point, and his voracious reading that keeps him so well informed.

2007 Trinidad mission team with Trinidad friends

Pastor Tony uses object lesson for illustration in sermon.

canvas have been some of the images he has employed to make sermons come to life.

When changes need to be made, he seeks consensus. Pastor Tony is a hard worker who prepares his sermons well, visits the sick, and works on every project that the church undertakes. He leads the congregation in a subtle and effective way that makes us better. He is still a missionary at heart and is leading us to be a mission minded church, reaching out without regard to race, sex, nationality, or geographic location.

Carol Ann Hoard: When we took the youth to Grifton, NC, to work on flood relief, Kathryn Spangler and Anna Hawkins helped gut a flooded mobile home and had to carry out a sewage filled toilet, which decorated them royally. Their comment: "Jesus stayed on a cross for us, and we can at least carry a toilet." When we went to Toluca, Mexico, our job was to build a concrete foundation for a school. The contractor did not want to work with us because it was the rainy season. The missionary, Lynn Sasser, assured him that we were close to God and the weather man had promised it would not rain while we worked. Believe it or

Disaster relief in Griffin, North Carolina

Rev. Carol Ann Hoard (1999- present)

Carol Ann Hoard earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Appalachian State University in 1992 and a Master of Divinity degree from Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity in 1998. Even while going to school, she accumulated experience working with high risk youth, with the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, as a summer youth worker at the Sharon Baptist Church and Fair Plaines Baptist Church, and as children and youth director at Lattimore Baptist Church from 1994 until coming to First Baptist in 1998. She is a native of Cherryville, NC, and is married to Joel Hoard and has two sons, Lavery and Willis.

Rev. Carol Ann Hoard

Carol Ann has taken the youth camping, rafting, through the corn maze, on scavenger hunts, ski trips, fifth quarter parties after football games, and has Bible studies. However, she has mainly encouraged them to serve the Lord as they have fun. For example,

they sold box lunches to raise money for Stephen Causby and Haley Chitty who were serving on mission fields. They entered the Relay for Life to raise money for the American Cancer Society. They have sponsored Valentine banquets and other banquets to raise money for their mission trips. They have gone to youth camps at Camp Caswell and to Passport missions camps from Florida to North Carolina to Boston, MA, to encourage their relationship with the Lord as they have fun.

Each year the high school seniors go to Beech Mountain where they think about their years in the church youth program– the good and the bad. They take inventory of their lives, past, present, and future. The seniors agree that it is the most meaningful trip and also a lot of fun.

Each summer the young people go to Passport camp. They have been to one at Emory Riddle University, two at Wingate University, one at Stetson University, and one at Gordon College in Boston, MA. At these camps, the young people go to mission sites all over the community and work several hours each day. Each night they gather for worship, group devotions, and meaningful conversation.

The youth enjoy local missions in summer. They clean yards, prepare food, and engage in random acts of kindness for extension members of the church, and for the homeless. They enjoy their time together.

Their fall "back to school" retreat is usually held at Camp Awanita in the North Carolina Mountains. There they are divided into "family" groups, a great way to build relationships and make new friends. The closing worship experience is led by high

High School Senior Retreat

not, it didn't rain while we worked, but it poured down as soon as we headed to the bus to leave.

Carol Ann and Mallory Monroe tell the good news in Trinidad.

Skip Warrick: On some of our trips with the youth, I was the one who drove the old bus, and from time to time it would give us a fit. When we went to West Virginia, we were traveling the Interstate Highway when the brakes froze up. We took everybody's luggage out and surrounded the underside of the bus with it. When the trapped exhaust fumes warmed the brakes, they unfroze and we proceeded on.... During a time when we had no youth minister, we took a bus load to Carowinds. When we left Carowinds and got down the road a piece, we suddenly realized that Michael Grose was not on the bus. We turned around and found Michael. He was crying but all right.

Bahamas Team

Woody Kennedy: We took a group of 15 high school seniors and college students to the Bahamas on a 61 foot sail boat. We were the crew around the clock. When we reached our destina-

tion, we worked all day on an elementary school, had a bonfire and devotional at night, and slept as best we could on the deck of the sail boat. I got so little sleep that I took a pill. They tell me that I would say something and then bow my head, as if in prayer. Actually, I was so out of it that I didn't know what I was saying and I was sleeping, not praying.

Tony Tench: The mission trips to Charleston with our middle and high school students serve as a commissioning for our high school seniors, but the kids also work hard. They paint houses, do backyard Bible studies in playgrounds and apartment complexes, clean up yards for those who cannot do it for themselves, help turn an old school into a church, assist a rescue mission, etc. Twenty high school students and ten adults went on mission to Toluca, Mexico, a few years ago to assist missionaries there. We helped build a foun-

Worship on Folly Beach, South Carolina

dation for a Christian school, painted a church, and gave out New Testaments to people in the neighborhood of the school and church. Andy Roby took the young people in the Chapel Choir to the North Carolina Mountains in 2002. They sang and put on skits for Hispan-

continued on page 114

Good "clean" fun at camp Awanita

school seniors, and new sixth graders serve communion. This is very meaningful and is a sort of rite of passage to and from high school.

In 2000 the youth took a mission trip to Grifton, NC, to work on flood relief following Hurricane Floyd. The work was dirty and hard, but they loved it.

In 2001 they went to Toluca, Mexico, where they helped build the foundation for a new school and passed out treats and light bulbs to start conversations about Jesus the light of the world.

In 2004 the mission trip was to Weimar, Germany, where the youth taught English in schools and joined with German students to prepare and present a musical. A visit to the World

Back-to-school retreat at camp Awanita

War II era Buchenwald concentration camp opened young eyes about how cruel people can be. A visit to the Wartburg Castle where Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German connected the youth to the history of the church.

A continued blessing from this mission experience was the visit of a group of these German students to Shelby in the Fall of 2004. This group of students from the Hoffman Von Fallersleben Gymnasium in Weimar stayed in the homes of First Baptist members and attended classes at Shelby and Crest High Schools. Our congregation was able to share with these students, most of whom were not church members in Germany, our love for Jesus. Since 2004 we have been thrilled to hear reports from missionary Rick Dill in Weimar of those students who came to faith through the on-going process of connection with American Christian young people!

In 2006 the youth went to the very first "Faith in 3D" Conference at Disney World. Youth from three denominations (Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopal) came together to worship. This even was a great experience of "body building" for our young people as they experienced the larger Body of Christ. Tonda Folk, Matt Brinton, and Carol Ann took turns driving the church mini-bus with lots of games played and a good time had by all.

Trinidad bandana

In 2007 the youth traveled to Trinidad, West Indies, where they sang concerts in a youth prison, a rehab center, and schools. Every afternoon they led backyard Bible clubs using Bible story bandanas prepared by Gene Matheny from art work produced by

Youth help after Hurricane Floyd – Grifton, NC.

Building a school in Tolouca, Mexico

Group singing at Weimar with German students

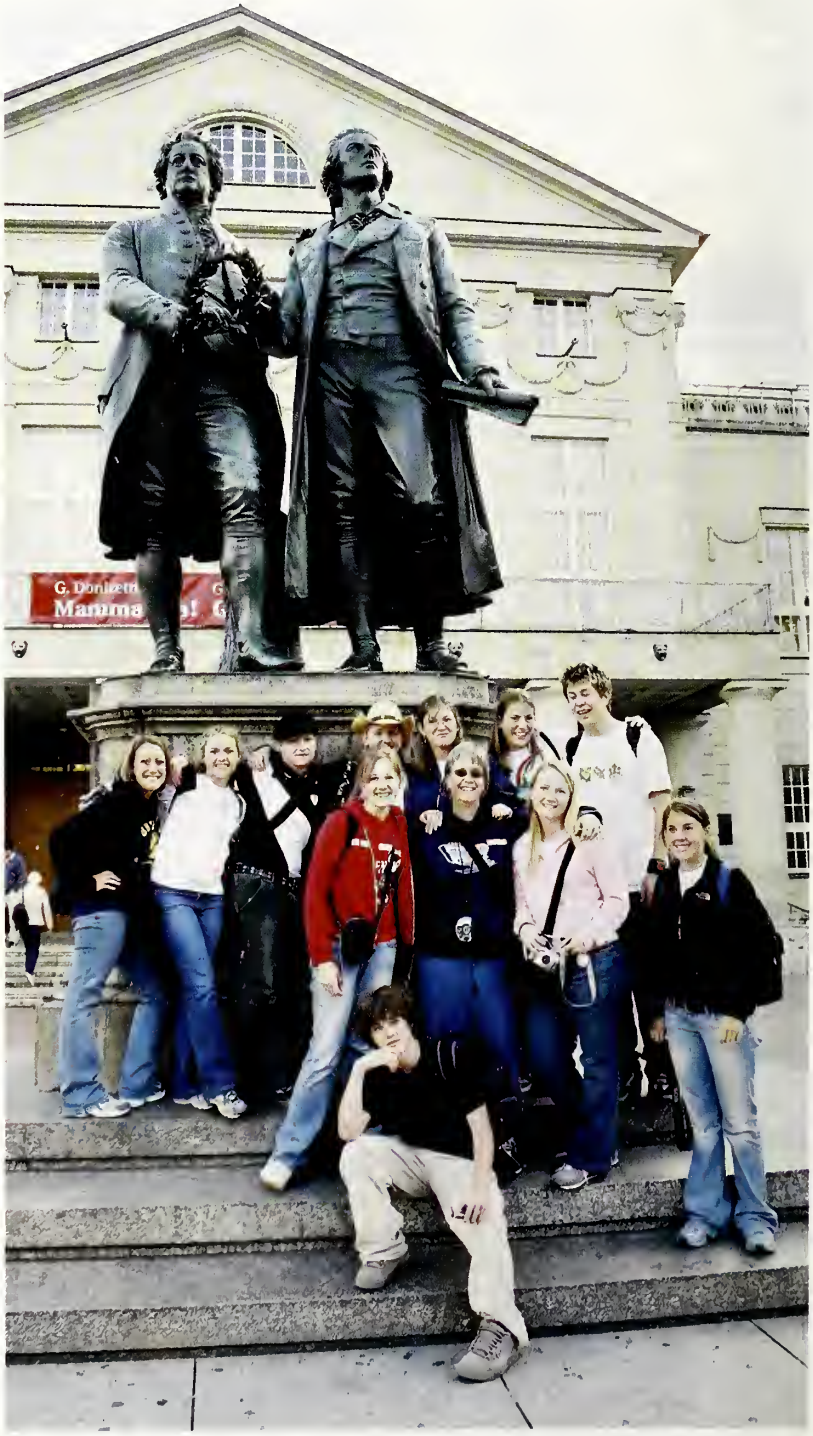
ics, at a nursing home, at a church, at the start of a new church, on the square of a mountain town, and at a children's home. They took on similar projects on a mission trip to Philadelphia. Our mission trip to Weimar, Germany, included 29 youth, 6 college kids, and 12 adults from our church plus a similar group from Columbus, Georgia. They taught English, joined German kids for a musical, performed in a church, and encouraged a youth revival. On our mission trip to Atlanta, the young people in our Chapel Choir presented an

Youth Choir sings near Spruce Pine.

outdoor musical, conducted backyard Bible studies, helped a local missionary, played handbells at Underground Atlanta, were inspired by the birthplace of Habitat for Humanity, and sang the National Anthem at a Braves game. Our kids enjoy the mission trips, but they work hard at being missionaries from First Baptist Church.

Jo Ann Surratt: The youth of today are influenced by bright colors, loud music, and their peers, among other things. Carol Ann Hoard understands how important it is to use these things to reach the children about God so they can express their relationship to God. She has encouraged them to use bright colors to decorate ceiling tiles in the youth room above the gym to demonstrate how they have encountered God during the summer. As a parent, I highly commend Carol Ann for allowing the children to express their faith and be a witness to others in such a creative way.

Allen Griffin. The theme of these lessons, as depicted on the bandanas, was "Real JOY" which comes from seeing Jesus first, Others second and Yourself third. The youth were blessed by the experience.



Carol Ann and Susan Grose pose with youth at statue in Weimar, Germany.

Dr. Andy Roby (2001 – present)

Dr. Andy Roby

Andrew Roby succeeded Bob Dills as Minister of Music at First Baptist in 2001 and continues to serve in that capacity. He married his wife Mary in 1982, and they have a daughter, Rachel Karis, and a son, David Andrew.

He earned his Bachelor of Music degree from Union University and his Master of Church Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He served as Minister of Music at Bethany Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, from 1984-1987. After serving as part-time music instructor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1986-1987, he taught at Asbury College in Wilmore, KY, and also served as Music Minister at Memorial Baptist Church in Frankfurt, KY, 1987-1990. Dr. Roby then taught at Shorter College in Rome, GA, and he served as Minister of Music, first at Rowland Springs Baptist Church and at Garden Lakes Baptist Church 1990-1993. Before coming to Shelby he was a teacher and chair of the Department of Music at Union University, Jackson, TN. He served as interim at seven churches in that area 1993-2001.

Chapel Bell Choir at Handbell Festival in Charlotte

Under Andy's leadership the music and drama ministries have produced a fully staged, full-length musical several Christmases. Crystal McDaniel, Susan Evans, and Vicki Halloran have been in charge of stage direction and sets, and a host of people have assisted in technical and backstage roles. Members of the Sanctuary Choir have formed the chorus for each of them, and cast members have been drawn almost exclusively from within the church body.

Church members will remember *All on a Christmas Day* presented in the church gym on four nights, *I'll Be Home for Christmas* presented at Malcolm Brown Auditorium two nights, *Four Tickets to Christmas* in the church gym for four nights, and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in the sanctuary. The *Amahl* production featured David Roby, Mary Roby, and Donald Martin, Mary Roby's father, as well as the Sanctuary Choir.

Andy and the choir and orchestra have presented a Brooklyn Tabernacle worship collection and the *Experiencing God: The Musical.* Famed composers and pianists, Joseph Martin and Mark Hayes, have conducted workshops and presented

Christmas musical, Four Tickets to Christmas

Amahl and the Night Visitors

concerts, and the music ministry has made a Tenebrae Service on Passion Sunday an annual event.

During Andy's tenure, young people in the Chapel Choir have gone on several mission trips. They went to Philadelphia in 2002 where they sang in nursing homes, a small church, a merchant seaman's center, and in an outdoor park, where they also led inner city kids in sports activities. They went to Spruce Pine in the N.C. mountains in 2003 and presented a musical in nursing homes, senior adult centers, a mission church, and a Hispanic Vacation Bible School.

They joined with teenagers in Weimar, Germany, in 2004 to present a musical *Friends 4 Ever*. More than 50 of the German youths involved are now attending the Baptist Church of Weimar. On the Atlanta mission trip in 2005, the Chapel Choir, Handbell Choir, and other young people of the church assisted a Baptist missionary and presented a musical and played handbells in Underground Atlanta, at Koinonia Farms in Americus, GA, and at an apartment complex filled with immigrant refugees and surrounded by a Buddhist shrine, a Hindu temple, and an Islamic mosque. They also sang the National Anthem at an Atlanta Braves baseball game.

Youth minister in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

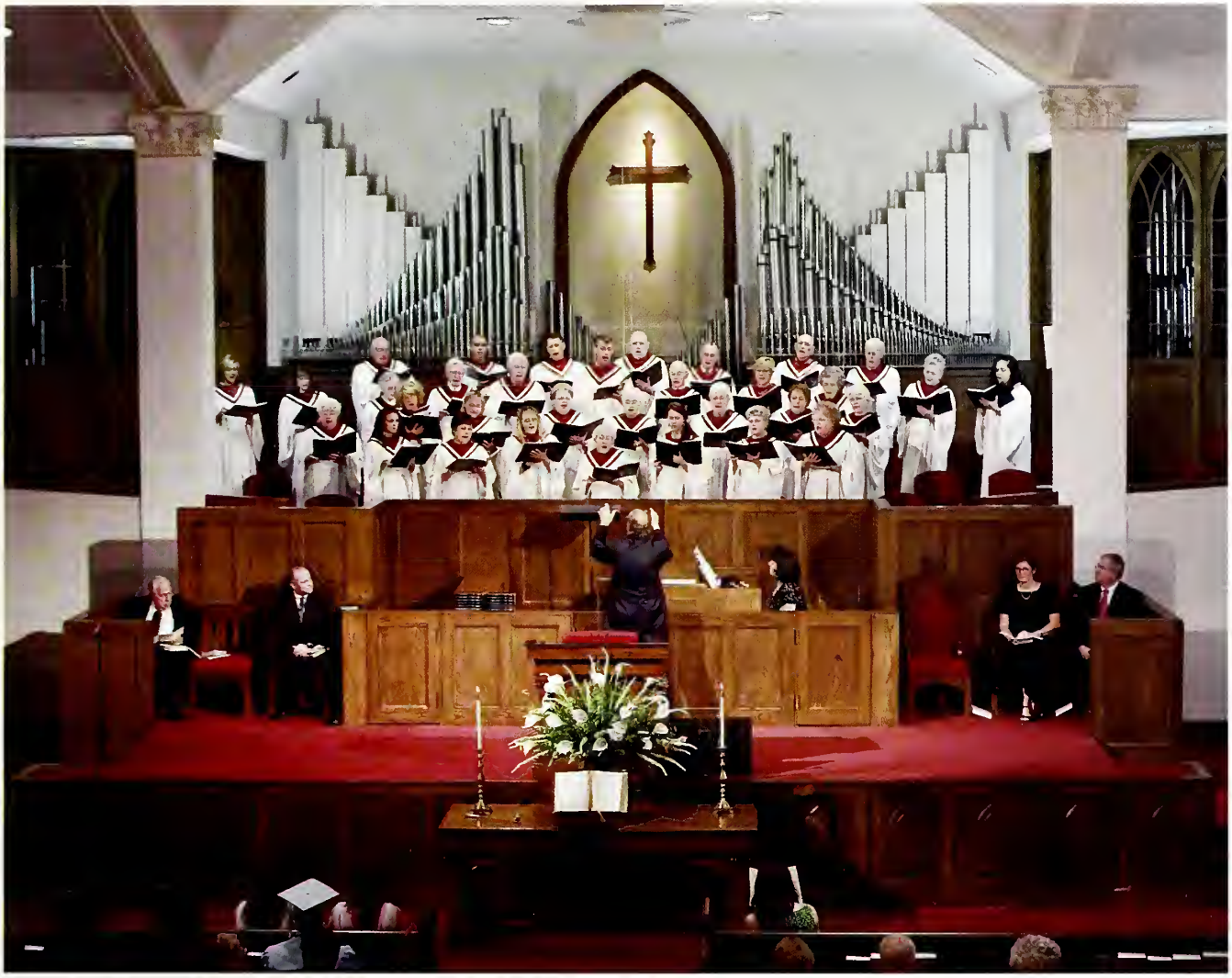
The Chapel Choir also participates in other mission trips with the other youth of the church. In the summer of 2007 this youth choir went on mission to Trinidad. Several young people of the church are now in college training to be ministers of music.

The early Sunday morning worship service (First Worship) started in 2003 and now uses the talents of nine vocalists and a rhythm section. The accent is on the vocal so that the congregation can join in more readily.

Singing at an elementary school in Trinidad

Andy is one of the directors of the NC Baptist Singers, a group of ministers of music and other church musicians from across the state. He has served as director of the All-State Baptist Youth Choir. Youth from First Baptist have been selected by audition to serve in the All-State Baptist Youth Choir every year since its inception.

As of 2007 First Baptist has six choirs, three handbell choirs, an orchestra, a First Worship



band, and a First Worship ensemble. Participants go from pre-school to the grave.

Dr. Roby's call to the choirs of First Baptist Church is a call to sing and play to the glory of God. He signs off on newsletters to the choir with J.S. Bach's famous "SDG" – *Soli Deo Gloria* – "To God alone be glory."

Soli Deo Gloria
"Ev'ry woman, ev'ry man, and ev'ry creature in the land
has been designed to understand there is a higher power.
Ev'ry woman, ev'ry man, and ev'ry creature in the land
has been created by His hand. He is a mighty tower.
Soli Deo Gloria. To God alone be the glory."

Text of anthem performed by Sanctuary Choir by Larry Bryant arr. Mark Hayes

Along with the capable leadership of volunteer teachers, Andy encourages the children's choirs to "develop a soundtrack for REAL life" as disciples of Jesus.

Perry Holleman: I met with the First Baptist Church search committee for about two hours and didn't realize until the meeting broke up that the man sitting next to me was the pastor, Tony Tench.

I substitute for teachers who have to be absent. With the Sunday School using many different kinds of literature, I occasionally find myself about to teach the wrong lesson from the wrong material. I am constantly amazed and delighted at how well the ministerial staff gets along. I remember our first Christmas Eve worship at First Baptist Church and the prayer I said privately: "Father, I don't deserve this ministry, but I sure do appreciate it."

Rev. Perry Holleman (2001- present)

Rev. Perry Holleman

Perry Holleman succeeded Tony Tench as Minister of Education in 2001, and as of 2007. He is still serving in that capacity. He attended UNC Chapel Hill and Temple College before earning his Bachelor of Religious Education degree from Piedmont Bible College. He did post graduate work at UNC Greensboro and at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served churches in High Point and Cherryville before coming to Shelby.

Perry married Elizabeth (Lib) James in 1974. They have a daughter Jamie and husband Jason Conrad, sons Mitchell and wife Marsha, and Adam.

Perry has had a hand in planning and organizing new adult

RA's delivering Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes to Elizabeth Church

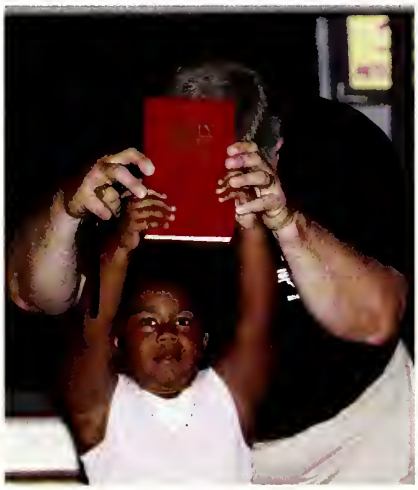
Sunday School classes, Café Phoenix, ministry to singles, and Fusion ministry to college students, the Super Summer program for children, the Greatest Treat Festival to take advantage of Halloween to reach out to youth, the Marion School partnership, and a jail ministry.

As Minister of Education, Perry Holleman wears many hats. He supervises Sunday School, Discipleship Training, TeamKID, children's missions (RA's, GA's, Mission Friends), WMU, Baptist Men, Sonshiners, Bible studies, Singles Ministry, Deaf Ministry, literature acquisition, *The Informer*, the Weekday Ministry, Jail Ministry, Marion School Ministry, Extension Members Ministry, media centers, and Vacation Bible School. He preaches, teaches, and leads the music as needed.

The Cat in the Hat *has nothing on Perry.*

Flag salute at VBS
Perry leads the pledges at VBS...

and helps children know what to do.



FBC Support Staff

Dianne Travis

Dianne Travis has been a secretary at First Baptist since 1979. She started out in music and youth activities, then music and senior activities, and finally church secretary. She worked with Rev. Bob Dills, Rev. Glenn Davenport, Dr. Gene Watterson, Dr. Wayne Stacy, Dr. Robert Canoy, and Rev. Tony Tench. Her present title is Ministry Coordinator. Her ministry tools have changed from typewriter to word processor to computer. Dianne serves as a valuable ministry assistant to each of the ministers. Her willingness to serve the congregation and her attention to detail and precision have been resources that have enabled the congregation's teams and committees to function effectively.

Gail Adams

Gail Adams worked with the accounting and credit supervisor at A.V. Wray and 6 Sons Department Store for 30 years, and she says that Mr. Wray "taught her everything she knows." Church member Sue Smith was Gail's bookkeeping teacher in

Dianne Travis: Once when the youth choir or handbell choirs were out of town overnight, the Music Minister kept guard from a chair in the hall to be sure the kids were safe. Custodian Ralph Davis cleaned out the office of a departing Minister of Activities and discovered a sofa he had never seen before in his many trips to that office. The maintenance supervisor brought a BB gun to the church to kill rats. Suddenly he was surrounded by Shelby policemen shouting for him to drop his gun! Cars were being looted when drivers took their children into the Child Care Center. The Business Administrator sat in his car in the parking lot, hoping to catch a thief. An undercover police officer walked up and asked him to quit interfering with his investigation.

Gail Adams: My full name is Gail Holland Adams. When I came to work at First Baptist Church one of the church secretaries was Gail Holland.

Sandra Bonner: I believe God gave me the job at First Baptist Church. He also gave me a volunteer job with the Veterans of Foreign Wars on a committee that helps the families of deceased or disabled veterans with food, clothes, and other needs.

Georgia Cooper: We prepared hot dogs and cookies for a block party given by the church. I saw a man pick up the cookies and run off. I ran after him, and so did an off-duty policeman who happened along. We caught the thief and rescued the cookies. No charges were filed. I was cooking biscuits one day when the smoke alarm went off. When the firemen came, I fed them some of my butter biscuits.

Office staff at FBC
Front row: Gail Adams, left, and Sandra Bonner, right
Back row: Dianne Travis, left, and Dianne Spangler, right

high school and she gave her a solid background in the discipline. She came to First Baptist Church in 1997 as financial secretary and served in that capacity under Dr. Robert Canoy and Rev. Tony Tench until 2003. She became Administrative Coordinator in 2003 and still serves in that way today – 2007. Mrs. Adams has provided solid leadership in the business and financial structures of the church even as she has strategically planned for the daily operations of our church staff.

Dianne Spangler

The newest staff member at First Baptist Church is Dianne Spangler, who became publications secretary at First Baptist Church on May 1, 2007. Prior to that she had worked at Kendall Drug, Sara Lee, and C. A. Short. She has proved to be very valuable in helping prepare this church history for publication.

Sandra Bonner

Sandra Bonner has served as office assistant at First Baptist Church since 2003. Prior to that she had worked at Keeter Ford in Cherryville, Hoyle Plumbing, Shelby Chrysler, and the local N. C. License Tag office.

Georgia Cooper

Georgia Cooper is chef at First Baptist Church, assisted by Dianne Jamison. Five days a week they prepare breakfast, lunch, and a snack for the staff and children at the Child Care Center and Mother's Morning Out. They prepare a meal for members attending the Wednesday night supper that precedes the prayer meeting. They cook lunch for the homeless on Fridays as needed to supplement the food brought to the soup kitchen from our WMU groups and from the churches of the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association. They also prepare other meals for other church groups from time to time. The Cleveland County Health Department inspects the kitchen every six months and has always given it a superior rating.

Maintenance Service Team

The maintenance Service Team for First Baptist Church makes sure that church facilities are clean and ready for use as needed.

The team is headed by Gail Adams. She in turn delegates responsibilities to the appropriate members of the team or to appropriate church committees. She works directly with the Building and Grounds Committee.

Dianne Travis, Ministry Coordinator, oversees the scheduling for programs, meetings, and events. She lets the team know what is required well in advance, and she creates a weekly schedule.

FBC Maintenance Staff (Left to Right)
Front row: Rex Morris, Georgia Cooper, Diane Jamison
Back row: Gene Booth, Raven Guest, Kathryn Guest, Nathan Childers

Nathan Childers sees to it that the church buildings are functioning as they should and the rooms are set up properly.

Katherine Guest makes sure everything is clean and ready for our people. Katherine Guest has served for many years preparing B-Building and the Sanctuary for study and worship and keeping the office area clean and ready for work every day.

Rex Morris takes care of outside grounds as well as cleaning and maintaining the five buildings.

Raven Guest does whatever needs to be done in the Day Care Center and in the activities building.

Gene Booth is a part-time worker who does whatever comes to hand.

Rex Morris: I retired as a State employee eight years ago and was given the privilege of joining the church Maintenance Service Team. And what a team it is! Gail Adams and Dianne Travis are wise and patient in their leadership, and their years of experience makes things go smoothly. Katherine Guest is a kind and gentle soul who can spot lint 50 feet down the hall. Nathan Childers loves his job and music and people. The children in day care love Raven Guest, and he will do anything for them. Gene Booth is the backbone of every special event. You seldom see these people, but you enjoy their handiwork every time you come to church. Our team doesn't have one boss. Every member of the church is our boss. One member advised us "all of the toilet paper rolls in the church should come off in one uniform direction, either over the top or from the bottom." Ralph Davis was our supervisor for 25 years. On one occasion he got a BB gun to run rats away from the church. Suddenly, a Shelby Police Swat Team showed up in full armament and ordered him to put down the gun. It took a lot of explaining. Each spring and fall the process of changing from heat to cool and back again brings a new host of problems. Our member-bosses want their space warmer or cooler, and we try to oblige.

Bible Study

It is a basic fact that Christians are not in a position to go on mission telling others about God's Word until they themselves know what is in God's Word. First Baptist acknowledges that Bible study is basic to all it does. In fact Jesus' Great Commission sends out believers to baptize and to *teach* new disciples to be obedient to His words (Matthew 28:18-20).

It all starts with the preacher. Former pastors, Dr. Gene Watterson, Dr. Robert Canoy, and present pastor, Tony Tench, all have preached series of sermons on specific books of the Bible, and they have taught Bible studies. The whole Sunday school organization is dedicated to teaching the Bible and its applications. Several of the WMU groups are Bible study groups and have met weekly or monthly to study Rick Warren's analysis of the Book of James. His 40 Days of Purpose and 40 Days of Community were Bible oriented as well and involved hundreds of the First Baptist people.

The Discipleship Training (Bible study) Committee at First Baptist Church is headed by Lynn Moss and Dawn Anthony, and Joan Flowers has been active in it as well. The training groups were started several years ago and are very active in 2007.

When a group decides what study they wish to pursue, Education Minister Perry Holleman helps set up the study which is usually supported by lesson plans, literature, and home work. A study usually lasts 10 or 12 weeks and is either held in someone's home or at the church. Those held at the church are generally held at 5:00 P.M. on Sundays.

The Beth Moore Bible Studies have been enthusiastically received by the ladies of the church. Several of her 10 or 12 week

Women discuss Bible study lessons.

courses have been taught here and her structured system of Bible study has been really helpful. There are several Beth Moore conferences every year, and FBC women have participated in them in Birmingham, Atlanta, Knoxville, Greensboro, and Charleston. About 50 women board the church bus and "have a ball" going and coming as well as attending an inspirational Bible study at the conferences.

Two Worship Services Sunday Morning

First Baptist Church of Shelby has always tried to reach out to the community in order to serve the Lord better. One of its tools was the Sunday Morning Service. That service involved a choir, traditional music, preaching, and "dressing up in one's Sunday best." It changed somewhat with the times and with the call of new ministers, but it had remained somewhat formal.

Meanwhile, Christians were enjoying Christian music of a different kind in concerts as well as on the radio and television. It appealed more to "baby boomers" and their children than it did to the World War II generation.

Lynn Moss: Tommy Young was our bus driver when we went to the Beth Moore conference in Birmingham. He prided himself on finding the best and fastest way, so on our way home he took us on a TOM-TOM TOUR. His best and fastest way ended up at a DEAD END sign. We got out and took pictures while Tommy turned the bus around and pointed it back to the highway and Shelby.

Dr. Roby directing at Sanctuary worship

Then composers and performers began preparing their contemporary music to reach people for Christ who might not be reached by traditional means. Pentecostals and other denominations began reaching people with their contemporary services. At last, 15-20 years ago, Baptists saw what was happening and they began to have contemporary worship services in addition to the more traditional ones. Today many churches have chosen to provide multiple entry points for people to worship. Both traditional and contemporary worship services are offered.

Early in 2002 Pastor Tony Tench, Minister of Music Andy Roby, and the deacons' worship sub-committee began what they called "The Gathering." This gathering for a time of prayer and praise prior to Sunday School became a great way to begin Sunday mornings at First Baptist. Following a suggestion by Katie Graves "The Gathering" quickly became " The Back Door" – a name based on a quotation from Max Lucado's book *God Came Near* where he wrote:

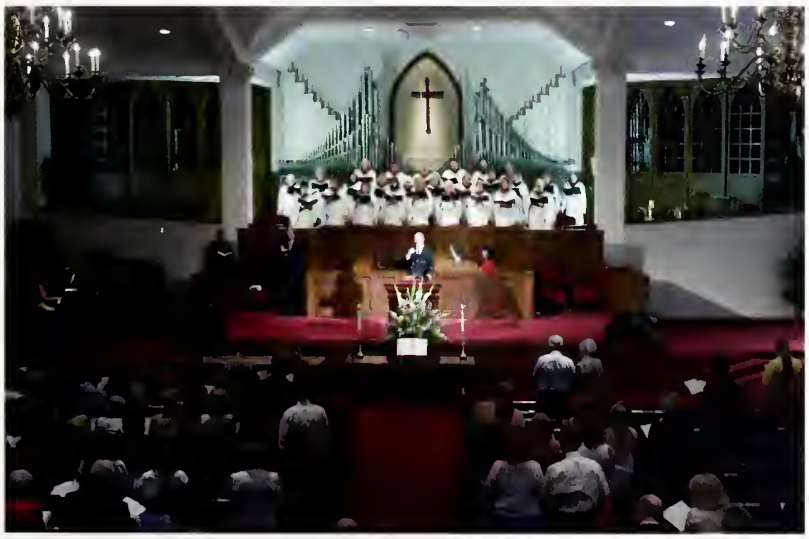
Congregation joins First Worship team lifting praise to God.

"You see in becoming a man, God made it possible for man to see God. When Jesus went home he left ***the back door*** *open. As a result, we will all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."*

A time of reflection at First Worship.

This praise gathering began with a piano and keyboard, then a bass and acoustic drum set, an overhead projector, and a singing group of young people. The main focus was singing, a five minute devotional by the pastor, then more singing and after about 20 minutes dismissed to Sunday School. This pattern continued for almost three years.

By the fall of 2004 the deacons and the church had considered the pros and cons and decided that two worship services on Sunday morning was the way to reach more people for Christ. First Worship would be in the gym and would be contemporary, and Sanctuary Worship would be in the sanctuary and would be traditional. It required about $34,000 to get the gym ready and hire extra childcare and musicians. Deacon Brandon Zock contributed many hours to the installation of new equipment needed for services.



Sanctuary Choir leads in worship.

This service is called *First* Worship for three reasons: (1) It is the "first" worship service of the day, (2) It is the contemporary worship service of "First" Baptist Church, and (3) It describes an expressed priority, viz. before we do anything else this week we will "first" worship. The First Worship Band (key-

Bible Bearer and Youth of the Week

board, drums, bass, guitar, and tamborine), and the First Worship Team of singers arrive about 8:00 A.M. on Sunday morning and warm up. As people arrive they are offered coffee and donuts. The service starts at 8:45 A.M. with 20 minutes of contemporary music and prayer. Words to the songs are projected on two screens. Then comes the sermon and response time. If the Lord's Supper is offered, the congregation comes forward to dip bread in the chalice of wine. Dress is largely casual. The children's choirs, youth chapel choir, and FBC Players (drama) perform in both services when scheduled.

Sanctuary Worship begins at 10:50 a.m. with piano music as the congregation gathers. The Sanctuary Choir leads in worship every Sunday morning, and the Sanctuary Handbells, Chapel Choir, Chapel Handbells, and Sanctuary Orchestra perform from time to time. The youth of the week, child Bible bearer, and deacon of

Youth-led Hanging of the Green in the Advent Season

the week are highlighted at each service. The music is primarily traditional, the choir wears robes, and the preacher delivers the same sermon that he delivered at First Worship. The service is televised.

As of 2007 First Worship attracts from 250 to 300 worshipers. Sanctuary Worship draws more, even though the large sanctuary makes attendance seem sparse. About two-thirds of new church members come through First Worship. It is always a time for rejoicing when First Worship and Sanctuary Worship combine on special occasions.

Parent - Baby Dedication Services

Parent-baby dedications began during Dr. Watterson's tenure as pastor. The ceremony harkens back to Hannah, wife of Elkanah, who dedicated her not-yet conceived son, Samuel, to the Lord "all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1:11)

The Lewis', the Allens, and Osadas present themselves and their babies for dedication.

The FBC ceremony dedicates parents and congregation to the task of teaching the child about God, but it does more than that. It introduces the baby to the church. It emphasizes that it takes a congregation of believers to help rear a child. The congregation shows the child that he/she is made in the image of God and is a child of God by creation. The congregation promises to teach him about his history through Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Ruth, and Jesus Christ.

This teaching is done to make sure that the day will come when the child enters the waters of baptism, takes Communion, and comes as an adult to full commitment to God's will and work. The congregation promises to provide opportunities to grow up in the teachings of the Lord and the parents accept their responsibility to fulfill these expectations.

At the end of the service of dedication, the child is presented with a certificate and a New Testament. The parent-baby dedication is a meaningful ceremony in a child's life and the life of the church.

First Baptist Goes to School

The Marion School Ministry began in 2003 when Education Minister Perry Holleman met Principal Jane Blake at a school board meeting and volunteered First Baptist Church as a partner for the school.

Perry Holleman: My lunch buddy at Marion School wants to know what my excuse is when I miss going. The principal told me that my lunch buddy's life has no constant except my visits. Another lunch buddy told another of our volunteers, "You are the first man in my life that I can trust."

Since the school has 75 or more teachers and staff, there is always a need for more volunteers from the church. Volunteers serve as prayer partners for staff members and classes, celebrate their birthdays, and visit them at school. Some volunteers become lunch buddies. A lunch buddy is assigned a student, spends 30 minutes one day a week at lunch with his or her buddy, and may spend additional time with the buddy.

Some members of the church serve as tutors for students in need of extra help. The school supplies the material and the volunteer provides the help. From time to time members of the church provide school supplies, collecting them in the "school bus" on the church breezeway.

Jane Blake and Perry Holleman stand beside the breezeway collection bus.

The teachers and other staff of the school appreciate our prayers. The children miss their lunch buddies when they fail to come. The principal is delighted to receive tutorial help for her students.

Twice a year the church provides a refreshment stand to provide the staff with drinks and snacks on work days. Every staff member gets a gift at Christmas.

The partnership with Marion School has produced ministry opportunities. The pastor was called to assist the principal in breaking the news to a student that his grandmother and primary caregiver had passed away. At the death of the adult child of one of the teachers, prayer partners were able to encourage and pray.

Edith Hoffman has followed her lunch buddy from Marion over to the Middle School and continues to buddy with her.

First Baptist Goes to Jail

Concerned Christians have undoubtedly visited people in jail for the last 2000 years, but the First Baptist Church jail ministry as is now exists has its origins in the mid 1970's. Chuck

Colson went to jail as a part of the meltdown of those closest to President Richard Nixon. He confessed his misdeeds, went to jail, found the Lord, and came out an evangelist intent on ministering to people in jail.

Carlos Young, a member of First Baptist, decided that the church should have a jail ministry, so he and his wife Connie went to Washington, DC, to learn how a jail ministry should function. When they returned to Shelby, Carlos began visiting people in jail, sometimes alone and sometimes taking someone with him. Eventually, his physical condition made these visits impossible.

Luther Green, Perry Holleman, and Ken Crawley prepare to enter jail annex.

In the early 1990's the Kings Mountain Baptist Association decided local Baptists should have a jail ministry, and First Baptist Church cooperated in the endeavor. Bill Wilder and Ken Crawley organized men to visit the main jail and the jail annex. The plan was for the men of First Baptist to visit the annex on Sunday six times a year and the uptown jail on Sunday three times a year. Other churches visited on other Sundays. Some of the women from First Baptist began visiting women in the main jail as well.

The idea of church people visiting jail inmates was new to the visitors, the prisoners, and the officers running the jail. Eventually the system was worked out so prisoners could be evangelized and the jailers could still maintain security.

Currently forms have to be filled out giving the jailor authority to check references on Christians wishing to talk to prisoners. A photo ID badge is then issued to each visitor, and the visitor must wear his badge any time he visits the prisoner.

Church visitors talk to the prisoners in their jail cells one on one until they have reached all who are willing to be reached. This usually takes one or two hours. They are given Christian literature provided by the church. They are introduced to Jesus, who He is and what He came to earth to do. They are asked if they are a Christian. If the answer is "No" they are asked if they would like to be. Nearly all who say they are not a Christian also say they want to become one. Two to five men accept Jesus as their personal savior during each trip to the jail, which is an inspiration to those who go.

Late in the year 2002 First Baptist Church and other churches also began teaching Bible Class on Thursday nights. When it is our turn to teach, a Bible class of ten willing prisoners starts at six o'clock and ends at seven. Another ten men then come to the class from seven o'clock to eight o'clock. A guard is usually in the room with the teacher. The church furnishes the literature for the classes.

Men who have participated in this ministry in recent years are Marion Adams, Herman Best, Ken Crawley, Gene Eighmy, Frank Garver, Mike Hardin, Charles Nalley, Richard Tedder, Bill Wilder, Perry Holleman, and Tony Tench.

Women who have participated in recent years are Dawn Anthony, Irene Padgett, Betty Kendrick, Roselin Williamson, Edith Hoffman, Marie Wall, Judy Hawkins, Cynthia Hamrick, and Beverly Hamrick.

In 2004 one of the church's fourth graders, Rachel Richards began a jail ministry of her own. She collects paperback Christian books for our visitors to give to prisoners. Her grandfather preached to prisoners in the state prison in Chattanooga County, Georgia, and inspired her ministry. Rachel calls her ministry C.L.I.P.S. – Christian Literature in Prisons.

On Mission to the Bereaved

Since time immemorial the ladies of First Baptist Church have carried food to bereaved families as an expression of their love and concern. For many years this opportunity fell on the Sunday School class of the deceased or on that of the bereaved. Eventually this fell to the WMU circles which would rotate the responsibility among the groups. However, as the church's women got older and groups reorganized into smaller groups of like ages, it became difficult for some groups to prepare a meal for a large family.

In 2001 the whole program was reorganized. Now all the women of the church are divided into six equal groups. Each group has two co-chairs and two women coordinate the Bereavement Team Ministry as a whole. The responsibility for preparing meals is rotated among the six groups. A coordinator calls the group that has the current responsibility. A co-chair then calls members of her group about menu needs.

Meals are for the family of a church member who has died and are taken to the designated home, unless the family prefers to have the meal in the Ladies' Parlor at the church.

As the congregation ages, more and more families need this service. In 2006 approximately 20 meals were provided. This mission opportunity is accepted by the ladies of First Baptist Church in love and is received with thanksgiving.

Habitat for Humanity

In 2000 Mike Gammons went on a building mission trip to Honduras and came back disturbed about the substandard living conditions in that country. When he came back home, he worked for Habitat for Humanity for a year and then encouraged First Baptist Church to build a Habitat house. The idea was to raise $40,000 and blitz- build a house in one week. The church agreed to take on the task and did so in 2003, using over 100 members of the church. In 2005 the church raised over $28,000 in quarters and then raised the rest and built another house. The church voted to include in its annual budget the money necessary to build a Habitat House every other year. Belinda Edwards and her family

Busy as bees on third FBC blitz-build

live in the house built in 2003. Belinda now works for the local Habitat affiliate. Aurelio and Imelda Lopez and their sons live in the house built in 2005. Aurelio and Imelda have been students in the church's English as a Second Language ministry. Tara Smith and her children live in the 2007 house.

Saturday
September 18, 2004

Dear Habitat for Humanity and Friends at First Baptist Church,

I want to let you know of the impact that Habitat has had on my life. HFH has expanded my world through the experiences and the people that have touched my life. It is one thing to rent a place and something totally different to actually be buying that place. You have brought my family much more than a house; we have a home.

As the house was lifted, so was my whole family. I met wonderful people that went to extraordinary measures for my family. I know the Lord had his hand in this by the way all those people came together to make it happen. The Bible that was given to me with all those signatures of the ones who helped build this house has been an inspiration to me..

Whenever I make a house payment, I know that the money is paying off my house. For someone who has never owned a house, this is a big deal! The house you built is so much more than a house. Cherished memories and treasured friendships are being made in this home of ours. Thank you for touching our lives in such a way as this. Thanks to each and every one who gave their time, energy and their money to make our home possible.

Sincerely,
Belinda Edwards

English as a Second Language

Three school teachers, Cindy Canoy, Janet Tench, and Lib Holleman, decided they would like to use their teaching talent and experience as a ministry opportunity to teach English to other language groups in the community. The church staff encouraged them to proceed.

In 2006 Canoy and Holleman attended the Literacy Mission Conference at Camp Caraway. Tench had been trained in literacy evangelism as a missionary in Africa. They joined together as a ministry team in January 2007 to begin the English as a Second Language ministry at First Baptist Church with Cindy Canoy who served as director and lead teacher and Lib Holleman and Janet Tench who served as teachers. Several other members have rounded out this team of encouragers in the registration and substitute teaching areas including Gwen Smart, June Yarboro, Susan Grose, and Beverly Borders. In the 2007-2008 season of ESL, Anita Cabiness has led a homework group for the children of the adult students while their parents are studying in class. These language learning classes are open to any people who speak any language.

The class meets once a week at the

ESL students and teachers, 2007

Amanda Page with friend in Atlanta, GA.

church, using the Ladies Parlor and nearby classrooms. Each session consists of social interaction around refreshments, followed by singing of scriptural songs, recitation of Bible verse chants, hearing a Bible story, and sharing prayer needs and prayer time. From the large group the students are then divided into beginner, intermediate, and advanced learners. The students receive English instruction through a dialogue-based program. Students participate in role-playing, situational activities, and authentic material to learn everyday conversational English.

The teachers, along with other members of the church, organize a celebration meal in the church parlor at the end of the semester. The students invite their families and bring along dishes of food characteristic of their countries of origin to share with the whole group. The classes stop during the summer months and start again in the fall.

The classes are free to students and require a great deal of work by the teachers. The students sometimes ask their teacher, "Why do you do this for us?" The answer is Christ's love!

Carol Ann and intern Matt Alley work shoulder-to-shoulder in Trinidad.

Ministries Interns

First Baptist Church uses several kinds of student interns.

Carol Ann Hoard, Minister of Students and Activities, has had a paid summer intern included in the youth budget ever since 2003 when Brooks Rollins served as the first. Her intern in 2004 and 2005 was Anna Hawkins, one of our members. In 2006 Brandon Juhaish and 2007 Matt Alley served in this capacity. This intern works for 10 weeks. They assist Carol Ann and take her place when she is on vacation or on a mission trip.

The church's Minister of Education has had numerous interns provided by Gardner-Webb University to serve along side FBC ministers. They are not paid, but they get college credit from the GWU School of Divinity and undergraduate programs.

Minister of Music Andy Roby has supervised several music and technology interns over the years. As far as the church is concerned, the intern program is a success.

Missionaries

At First Baptist Church the ministerial staff, the Church Missions Council, and the WMU all work together

to promote missions in every church organization and with every member. The end result is that youth activities include one or more mission trips every year. Youth choirs do the same. Adults go on mission trips sponsored by the church or by the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association or by Hands on Missions. The mission trips have carried church members outside the country to the Soviet Union, Jamaica, Mexico, Barbados, South Africa, Kenya, France, Germany, Trinidad, and Honduras as well as Rochester, NY; Charleston, SC; New Orleans, LA; Wilmington, NC; Philadelphia, PA; Atlanta, GA; and Alaska as well as other places foreign and domestic. In response to disaster relief following Hurricane Katrina on the gulf coast, our members have served in Laurel, Perlington, and Gulfport, Mississippi.

Mission trips sponsored by FBC are headed by one or more of the church's ministerial staff and have been reported in some detail in articles about those ministers or about the church programs they lead.

The encouragement and basic training in missions provided by the church has resulted in just about every Sunday School class, every WMU group, and the Baptist Men undertaking frequent projects to help those who need help.

Some members have started their own ministries to serve the local area. Others have volunteered to work with established charitable organizations that work with those in need. And some have become full-time missionaries or other full-time Christian servants.

Travis Burch gets a hug.

Jean Cabaniss

Jean was educated at Gardner-Webb, Wake Forest, Duke, Southeastern Seminary, and Appalachian State. She worked at Gardner-Webb University, Meredith College, and Cleveland Community College. She also worked in Hawaii, Virginia, and several foreign countries as a missionary educator.

Jean was academic dean at the Hawaii Baptist Academy in the early 1970's, where she learned to feel comfortable working with students from Japan, China, Korea, the Philippines, and Italy. In the late 1970's the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention sent her to Jordan where she taught English at a Baptist elementary school; then to Gaza where she taught English at the Baptist School of Allied Health Services at the Baptist Hospital; then in the mid 1980's to Japan where she taught English at a Junior College, taught Bible classes for high

Natalie Jones shares at block party.

school and college students at a Baptist church, and taught Bible classes in her home.

In the early 1980's Jean worked with the Woman's Missionary Union in Virginia organizing and supervising Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women groups all over the state. In 1991 she began serving as Director of International Students at Gardner-Webb University.

She was born Jean McSwain, was married to Rev. Forrest Teague until he died, and is now married to Charlie Cabaniss.

Leaths in Korea

Roland and Lois Leath

In 1973 Roland Leath retired as "Minister of Almost Everything" at First Baptist Church, and the very next year he and Lois were called to be missionaries in Seoul, South Korea. Roland served as pastor at the Baptist church and also as chaplain for American service men at the base in Seoul. They lived in an apartment in the town compound.

People were converted by his preaching and personal contacts (through an interpreter), and they loved his piano playing. Before they returned to the States, Roland started a successful building program so the Americans and their Korean converts "could have a church just like the ones back home."

One of the service men in the Seoul church was John Lawrence, Jr., whose wife changed from Presbyterian to Baptist. Harlan Harris came to lead a revival in Seoul, and his driving was just as dangerous in Korea as it was in North Carolina. Young people from Campus Crusade came and became good friends with the Leaths.

Of course, the political situation was touch and go with conflicts in all the surrounding countries, but North Korean Christians who came to South Korea worshipped right along with their southern compatriots. Seoul was a place of many religions, and the Baptist church was a beacon for Jesus.

Marie Farrow: I have not led a normal or status quo kind of life up to now. I've worked in missions most of my adult life. I have run from crocodiles on the Amazon, talked with a member of the King's cabinet in Thailand, hiked through leech infested jungles, bathed in rivers, and eaten bugs. I lived through a revolution and several coups in the Philippines, the end of communism in Albania, and have been a captive of rebels. As a nurse in Gastonia, I am actually getting a paycheck and benefits. This is what God wants for this season in my life. May God bless us all as we minister on that mission field beneath our feet!

Marie Farrow

Marie Farrow grew up in First Baptist Church. She heard about missions from Youth Director Mel Doughty and Music

Director Van Ramsey and an assortment of Sunday School teachers and youth workers. When she was a high school senior, she felt and accepted her call to be a missionary.

For more than 20 years her missionary activities were underwritten 100% by gifts from hundreds of individuals and half a dozen churches. Sue Hudson's Sunday School class supported her financially each month for most of those years.

She started out with nine short stints with Wycliffe Bible Translators in the Philippines. Then she worked and got her nursing degree from NC A& T (on a full scholarship to a minority white student in a black college). Next she rejoined the Wycliffe ministry in the Phillippines for several years, where she nursed the sick and wounded, ran a clinic, and taught classes in primary health. During the People's Power Revolution of 1986, she and others went on a rescue mission and ended up prisoners guarded at gunpoint for three days before escaping.

Four years later she returned to North Carolina where she worked as a nurse in a hospital and taught at a community college. Missions called her once more, this time to Youth With a Mission's University of Nations. During her eight years with that organization, she traveled and taught throughout Asia, Europe, and North and South America. Many of her students are medical missionaries serving all over the world. She and others were in Albania three days after communism was banned, and during that period of upset they held medical clinics, conducted a nationwide medical survey, distributed Albanian Bibles, and won over 100 people to Christ. In Thailand she headed two student teams that worked with over 1600 handicapped children in a Bangkok orphanage.

Burnout brought Marie back to the States for recovery, but she soon joined Healing for the Nations, conducting spiritual retreats in Hawaii and then in Atlanta and the north Georgia mountains for people with spiritual problems.

Marie worked for Healing for the Nations for over eight years. By that time she realized that she was 50 years old and had spent over 20 years of her life as an unpaid missionary providing her own support with the help of others. She is now living in Shelby and working as a nurse at Gaston Memorial Hospital

Pat Chamberlain Thorpe

Pat Chamberlain Thorpe grew up in First Baptist Church, did social work after college, and then went on to seminary. After seminary, she served two years in Thailand with the Journeyman Program of the International Mission Board. She married, and she and her husband served six years as missionaries in Nepal. As of 2007, she works for the International Mission Board telling others how to become missionaries. She and her husband volunteer for medical missions in various parts of the world.

Frank and Josie Garver

Frank and Josie Garver volunteered for three mission assignments. They served the Calvary Baptist Church in Bangkok, Thailand, during 1991-1992. An important ministry there was outreach and evangelism among refugees from Burma. Thirteen

Garvers in Japan

Burmese accepted Christ and were baptized.

They were in Okinawa, Japan, on two different occasions. During 1994-1995 they served the Central Baptist Church in Urasoe, and in 1997 they served the Koza Baptist Church in Okinawa City.

Haley Chitty

Haley Chitty has been serving with Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) on the campus of the University of Tennessee for several years. Her job has been to make friends with students, lead them to Christ, and help them stay on the straight and narrow. She has to raise her own financial support, and many members of First Baptist Church are helping her.

Haley Chitty with friend at University of Tennessee

In the summer of 2007, Haley was trained in Colorado in leadership and ministry so she could serve as Associate Campus Director for CCC on the campus of University of North Carolina, Wilmington, starting in November 2007.

Haley lost her parents and two brothers in a plane crash on New Year's Eve 2006 and has carried out her CCC duties with a broken heart and with the prayers of family and friends.

L. E. Culbertson

L. E. Culbertson served a year with Mission Year in a poor neighborhood in Philadelphia. She and her fellow Mission Year friends volunteered with social services agencies in the neighborhood, worshiped and worked in a neighborhood church, and trained to be better Christian advocates for the poor and downtrodden. She worked with a house for homeless women and children, a senior center, the local Head Start Program, and the Greater Bethel Temple Church. Her financial support came from friends and relatives. L.E. was introduced to Mission Year by Dr. Tony Campolo when he came to preach at First Baptist Church. She currently serves in the church's Child Care Center.

Hadley Heath

Hadley Heath is a Morehead Scholar at U.N.C. Chapel Hill, and they expect their scholars to engage in meaningful public service as well as to do well academically. Hadley chose to go to Calcutta, India, in the summer of 2007, where she worked with the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa's organization) for eight weeks. She taught at their school and helped at their Home for the Dying. Local Baptist missionaries helped her find a place to stay, but except for that, she was absolutely on her own, though the Morehead Committee paid her expenses.

Once back at the University of North Carolina in the Fall of 2007, Hadley reflected in an email to her college buddies saying, "When I lived in a house full of missionaries this summer, we'd all laugh at our feet. Because during the Monsoon season in Calcutta, there wasn't much we could do about the muck all over everything. It was SO BEAUTIFUL. I've been really sad since then, that my feet are so clean." The world as

we know it comes to an end when we call ourselves to live out the compassion of our Lord on behalf of others.

Kathryn Spangler

Kathryn Spangler served in a ministry called The Door of Hope in Johannesburg, South Africa, thanks to the financial support from family, friends, and First Baptist Church. She served a three month stint between semesters at Meredith College, then another three month stint, and then returned to Africa a last time to visit the friends she had made.

Kathryn worked 12 hour shifts at an orphanage run by The Door of Hope for abandoned babies. Sometimes the mothers let the orphanage know ahead of time that they are bringing babies. Sometimes they just bring babies with no advance notice. When they come, they do so anonymously and leave the baby in the baby bin! An alarm sounds and orphanage workers get the baby and take care of it. Many babies were left while Kathryn was there.

Kathryn's parents, Ernie and Clara Spangler, visited her on one of her stints in Johannesburg. As soon as they walked in the orphanage, they were handed a baby to feed or change.

Kathryn is now a student at the Duke University Divinity School.

Kate Bridges

Kate Bridges with two of her friends and along with her father spent three weeks in Africa in the summer of 2007. During their time in Mozambique they "loved the children" at two different children's centers operated by Iris Ministries, Inc., a non-denominational Christian organization founded by Rolland and Heidi Baker.

The Causby Family

More than 40 years ago Harold and Mary Lou Causby decided they wanted to travel, visit missionaries, and work with them where they could. Mary Lou went back to school and became a nurse in preparation for such adventures.

From 1968 until 2004 they visited missionaries in more than 80 countries all over Europe, Asia, Africa, South America–you name it. Mary Lou would put her nursing skills to work and Harold would make talks or do construction or whatever needed to be done. They found out that many times the best way they could help was to listen to the missionaries talk about their work and about their families back in the states. When those foreign

Hadley Heath with friend in India

Hadley Heath: Living and working in Calcutta this summer, I've shed many tears – often with loneliness or sadness, other times with pure joy and thankfulness. In a country where the worship of many gods is evident, it's clear to me that no god is moving...acting...living like our God. I now see myself as a missionary wherever I am. I thank God for the encouragement of my church family at home at First Baptist Church, Shelby, for the compassion and discipleship I've seen and learned there.

Kathryn Spangler with infant in South Africa

missionaries came home on furlough, they knew they would be welcome at the Causby residence in Shelby.

One of their sons, Bob Causby, served as a Journeyman for two years in Liberia with the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention..

Their other son, David Causby, and his wife Becca are, along with their children, missions focused. When the children were still at home, they talked about the possibility of being missionaries.

In 1995 two of their children, Kate and Stephen, went on a church-sponsored mission trip to Rochester, N.Y. As soon as they got back, Stephen and his other sister, Lucinda (by then a nurse), left for service in Jamaica.

When Stephen went to NC State in 1998, he became involved in Campus Crusade for Christ. In the summer of 2000 he worked with Campus Crusade in the Atlanta inner city. In the summer of 2001 he ministered in East Asia. In the fall of 2002 Campus Crusade sent him to North Africa to serve for a year. Then in 2003 he returned to the Atlanta inner city as an intern. He spent the summer of 2004 showing the Jesus Video in Kenya. In 2005 he served an internship with Samaritan's Purse in Uganda to oversee food distribution in refugee camps. Then on to Liberia. Then back to Atlanta to work with World Relief assisting immigrants.

Meanwhile, Keeley entered Converse College and became involved with Campus Crusade. In May of 2005 she worked with Campus Crusade in Central Asia.

In July 2006 Becca Causby, the mother of the Causby child-missionaries, went to Malawi where she managed a pharmacy for a medical team.

So now three generations of Causby's are on mission at the same time. Even though Mary Lou is deceased, Harold still keeps in touch with many missionaries and continues to support young people through Campus Crusade. Thus, the work goes on from one generation to another with this family.

Lorin Cranford

Lorin Cranford, Gardner-Webb University professor and First Baptist Sunday School teacher, is part of a team that produces a gospel band radio program that is heard over stations all over the world.

Christ to the World Ministries was started by Larry Austin, a Texas millionaire who wanted to do more than make a lot of money. He has invested $500,000 of his own money to organize and support a series of 15 minute radio programs that feature the gospel message presented through various individual characters in the Bible.

Lorin's part in the production is to edit proposed programs for biblical accuracy. Also, he is being called on more and more to help write the programs. Since he is a professor at the Gardner-Webb University, he is well able to carry out this function!

Listeners can order a study guide if they choose. Many small churches seem to benefit from this. The programs and the accompanying guides are being made available in Korea, Indonesia, Cambodia, Mongolia, Russia, Ukraine, Siberia, Kazalchsten, and China.

Craig and Rafia Harris

Craig Harris grew up in First Baptist Church. He and his wife Rafia have been missionaries to Asia for the last six years. The two of them felt called to do a prayer walk in India and that led to their call as missionaries. They distribute thousands of Bibles in India and teach and train converts to win more converts. They work among Muslims in a land where over 90 percent of the people are Hindus. Even so, they see that

India is a great missionary field for Christians, and they are experiencing a great deal of success among the Indian people.

During their 2007 visit to First Baptist, Craig recounted the story of a Muslim man living in a remote area who dreamed one night that a man would come by way of the river to tell him of the one called Isa (the Arabic name "Jesus"). So the next day he gathered his family together and they journeyed to the river to wait. The day before a group of believers had boarded a small boat to begin a distribution tour of Christian literature. That morning as the man waited with his family he saw the boat coming around the bend and called to its passengers. He heard from them the good news of Jesus and was saved. Craig's remark to the Missions Night congregation was a powerful reminder. He said, "God is working while we are sleeping!"

Marion Adams

Marion Adams was pastor at Lily Memorial Baptist Church, Shelby, for 17 years. He and his wife Carrie joined First Baptist in 1995. Since his "retirement," he has made 40 international mission trips and preached in 14 different countries. Six of his mission trips were to Russia, where he preached on the steps of the Museum of Communism, preached on television, made a tape of a sermon at the request of some Russian Christians who used it for a delayed broadcast, preached to staff and patients at a 300 bed hospital in the Ukraine, and preached on "The Family" to 800 people at a house church.

Nathan Childers

Nathan Childers is a member of First Baptist Church, is employed on the church staff, is a musician, and is the owner of White Robe Music, a ministry.

In 2004 Nathan and his friend Mike Garland realized that major recording companies are only interested in musical ministries that bring in at least $10,000 per month, and yet there are hundreds of musical ministries that serve the Lord but do not reach the $10,000 threshold. Such lesser artists are generally expected to perform for free or for a love offering.

Nathan's ministry is to help promote gospel music in this area and convince churches and civic organizations to use talented local and regional Christian artists for special events and services and to compensate them as professionals.

Crystal McDaniel

Crystal McDaniel was involved in her father's ministry from the time she was 18 months old, traveling as many as 30 weekends a year. She started her own ministry in 2004 and has been promoted by Nathan Childers' ministry doing concerts, women's conferences, and ministering to the homeless as many as eight to ten times a month. Crystal now has a recording contract with Lamon Records and in July 2007 released her first album of Christian music entitled "Crystal McDaniel, One True Love."

On Mission

Many of the young people and adults have been on mission trips sponsored by First Baptist Church, and those trips are covered elsewhere. Some members have gone on their own or with other groups. Many of our former members are employed in full-time Christian service. Those reported to the History Committee are the following:

Julie Gammons was a US2 missionary in Atlanta 1994-1996 as a church planter. Terri Isaacs serves with missionaries in Chad and in southern Europe. Bob and Margaret Litton served on a healthcare mis-

"If snoring were singin, we'd be the Mormon Tabernacle Choir."
Tommy Young on the "tired" after a long day's work in the Katrina Rebuild ministry in Gulfport, Mississippi, October 2007

sion to Venezuela in 1994. John Bankhead helped build a school in Honduras in 1998. Kitty and Paul Eeds, along with Lynn and Art Moss, have gone individually to help flood victims in Louisiana.. Phyllis Wortman, Susan Grose, and others traveled to Russia with the Good News Singers of America in 1970. Bonnie Yarboro and others served at Campus Crusade Youth Camp in Colorado, and on a Campus Crusade mission trip to Chicago, where they arrived in a white stretch limousine courtesy of her father to work in one of the toughest neighborhoods imaginable. Angie Barrett served in Kenya; Cynthia Hamrick, Betty Kendrick, Dorothy Young, and Anita Cabaniss in Alaska; Marie Wall and Betty Kendrick in Wisconsin; Liz Berkebile and Bryte Warrick in Costa Rica with the GWU Choir; Bob Dills and Mary Alice Seals with the NC Baptist Singers in South Africa; and Dr. Charlie Hayek to Nicaragua.

Young people from FBC who have become ministers include Rick Bowling, David Best, Don Goforth, Robert Goforth, and Linda Kelly. Amy Brown has been a Passport Camp Counselor and a ministry intern at First Baptist Church, Asheville. Anna Hawkins has served as a ministry intern at First Baptist Church, Wilkesboro, and twice at First Baptist Church, Shelby.

Bryan Willis is Director of Special Events for Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Mark Cabaniss is a religious composer and publisher serving as President of Shawnee Press. Keith Gammons is an editor at Smyth & Helwys Publishing, which prints some of First Baptist Church's Sunday School materials.

Irene Padgett, Marie Wall, and Betty Kendrick joined Cynthia Hamrick of the Cleveland County Baptist Association on a mission trip to Toke, Alaska, where they cleaned and painted a church and parsonage. Linda Gammons, Dorothy Young, and Anita Cabiness went to Alaska to encourage the W.M.U. of Alaska.

Beverly Hamrick joined an associational mission trip to Johannesburg, South Africa. Faith Beam, daughter of former Minister of Education Billy Cooper, serves currently as Campus Pastor at Campbell University. Lynn Spangler served as teacher at the Hawaii Baptist Academy. Lee and Helen Gilliatt host a weekly breakfast outreach to students at Shelby High School that has been featured in national Young Life publications. Helen, a former First Baptist organist, has self-produced two albums of piano solos with a missions goal. The sale of the first recording benefited Partners with Haiti in the building of a church and the sale of the second benefited Young Life of Shelby. Dr. Charlie Hayek regularly serves in medical missions to central America.

In 2005 the Helen Gilliatt Sunday School class had a missions idea that resulted in the foundation of the "Silver and Gold Endowment." Over the period of a few months, church members brought in items of silver and gold – rings, bracelets, flatware, etc. The idea was that everyone has old jewelry and the like in their possession that is valuable but without immediate use. These pieces of silver and gold were brought to the church and sold to a Charlotte dealer and the proceeds were enough to build a church in India along with a "Jesus Well" to provide drinking water in an Indian village. This project supported the work of Gospel for Asia.

The Vietnamese Family

Back in the 1980's a Vietnamese family of refugees came to Shelby, and our church helped them get a start. We helped them find a place to stay, equip the rental house, get jobs, and enroll the children in school.

They attended First Baptist Church. After a few years they moved to Brooklyn, N.Y.

Over 20 years later, the family came back to Shelby for a visit with old friends and with an uncle and aunt who still live here. Betty Kendrick, who helped them settle here years ago, was one of the people they visited.

They wanted to see the house on Reese Road where they lived back then. They visited James Love School where they matriculated as children. They wanted to see First Baptist Church and some of them remembered songs they learned at church.

All but two of them have finished college. One is working on a master's degree. They all have good jobs and are Christians.

Betty Kendrick reported that the family is very appreciative of the head start that the people of First Baptist Church gave them back when they were homeless refugees.

"Jesus Well" in India

Christopher Road Baptist Church

In 1983 Harold Causby was on an associational advisory board for a mission group meeting in a store building on Christopher Road in South Shelby, and he recruited Evelyn and J. A. West to help the group become a church. With financial help from First Baptist Church and other churches, the mission did become a church in 1984. When the Wests returned to First Baptist Church in 1995, Christopher Road Baptist Church had about 500 members and was building its third building.

Westview Baptist Church

In 1961 the Kings Mountain Baptist Association conducted a survey in West Shelby to determine if there were a need for a new Baptist church in that area. A meeting of interested parties, including 25 or 30 people from First Baptist Church, was held at Graham School, and Westview Baptist Church was formed with 54 charter members.

By November they had the charter membership of 105. They quickly called a pastor and met at Graham School and the former Graham School until they built their first building. Since then they have added other buildings, and their membership has grown to 399.

Northside Baptist Church

In 1975 a group of Christians decided to start a new church. They met in homes, then in a local upholstering shop, and then an empty building. They contacted First Baptist Church to ask for assistance as they began. About 30 men and Dr. Watterson visited them one day "ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work." The people from First Baptist helped get the empty building ready for use, provided chairs for adults and small children, provided clerical help, printed bulletins, and took one group under their watch care. On May

4, 1975, First Baptist Church became the mother church of Northside Baptist Mission with 56 of the Northside people joining First Baptist Church by letter and 14 on a profession of faith. A year later they became Northside Baptist Church and all their letters were transferred from First Baptist Church. They purchased 5.5 acres of land at the intersection of Post Road and Scenic Drive, built a church there, and now have about 300 members. Gary McNeeley, one of their founding members, says "We would not be here today except for Dr. Watterson and First Baptist Church."

The Macedonian Call

In November 2006 the church Mission Council proposed and First Baptist Church agreed to accept the "Macedonian Call." That means that the church adopted the Albanian and Roma peoples who live in Macedonia and Greece by partnering with Southern Baptist Convention and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missionaries to help them share the Gospel in that part of the world.

The church also agreed to pray for three people groups otherwise extremely difficult to reach in the 10/40 Window (between 10° North latitude and 40° North latitude across Europe, Africa, and Asia). These people groups are the Bedouins across North Africa and the Middle East, the Qashq'ai of Iran, and the Pattany Malay people of Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Adopt-A-People Covenant

First Baptist Church
Shelby, NC
December 2006

*As obedient disciples of Jesus Christ, we the members of **First Baptist Church, Shelby, NC** respond willingly and enthusiastically to the call of Christ to become global partners with other individuals, groups, and churches in adopting an unreached people group. We do this knowing that we are purposefully living out a part of fulfilling the Great Commission.*

✤

*We intend to empower, network, and mobilize people for the Kingdom of God by answering **The Macedonian Call** to serve with our missionaries living in Macedonia and Greece to adopt the **Albanian** and **Romany** peoples who live in those lands. We will do this in cooperation with the International Mission Board, SBC and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and other Great Commission Christians who are committed to our adopted unreached people groups. We commit to pray for the **Albanian** and **Romany** people and other ministries that are working to reach them. We promise to reach out and give of ourselves through our resources and persons, for at least three years, in a manner that effectively relates to their culture in order to make an eternal difference.*

✤

*We also commit ourselves to **Open the Window** and **Pray** for the following people groups inside the 10/40 Window – people who have little or no access to the Gospel: West Window – **The Bedouin** of North Africa and the Middle East; Center Window – **The Qashqa'i** of Iran; and East Window – **The Pattani Malay** of Thailand. While we may not reach their front door, we will commit ourselves to praying for windows to be opened in their lives for hearing God's good news in Jesus.*

December 10, 2006 _____ *WMU Director*

_____ *Pastor* _____ *Chairman of Deacons*

Weddings

Quinn Burgin & Wilson Saleeby Wedding

For more than ten years, First Baptist Church has had its own wedding directors. This practice came about to insure that the church facilities (carpet, furniture, etc.) were cared for throughout the proceeding.

The bride was required to have one of the two church directors along with an outside director from a florist or caterer if she chose an outside person or business. Soon, however, brides began to use the church director without another one.

The wedding director provides ideas and help to the bride and groom about how to plan a wedding ceremony suited to them. Usually four to six hours of preparation with the bride are needed

prior to the rehearsal and ceremony.

Contact with the florists, photographers, caterers (if reception is at FBC) is necessary so they are fully aware of the policy and by-laws of the church that regulate their services. For example, if there are candles used, the florist must cover the carpet to prevent tallow from spilling down. Another rule has to do with photography. No flash photography is allowed during the ceremony. The bride and her family are presented with a packet of FBC expectations in all areas of this event, and all participants are expected to comply. At this time, by-laws give the church more responsibility to provide free services to church members such as the director, sound technician, and custodians. Musicians employed by our church are paid a set fee by the bride's family.

Webb Chapel first wedding... Mac & Sarah Wells

Dr. Watterson remembers when he performed the wedding ceremony for Penny Hunt and Jim Corn in an outdoor wedding in Lattimore. As he was about to put the critical question to the bride and groom, the family dog walked down the aisle with a large bouquet around its neck. A rattled Dr. Watterson asked Jim if he would have Libby (Penny's sister) to be his wedded wife. Jim answered, "No." Then Dr. Watterson said, "How about Penny?" Jim grinned and said, "I will." The ceremony was successfully completed a few minutes later.

Dr. Avery McMurry recalls that in 1984 two Navy Lieutenants were married in First Baptist Church. The bride was his-daughter Carol McMurry and the groom was Patrick Driscoll.

McMurry Military Wedding

Marilyn Logan: My husband and I decorated at least sixty weddings at First Baptist Church through the years. I remember a wedding that was taking place in the chapel. Rev. John Lawrence was hearing the vows and preparing to sing "The Lord's Prayer" as a benediction, when one of the groomsmen fainted. The pastor calmly sang the benediction as everybody in the wedding party helped the embarrassed groomsman get back on his feet so that they could all take their places in the recessional as planned.

Patty Whatley: One Sunday evening Al and I were present at the worship service, but not really paying attention to the sermon. Instead we were holding hands and paying attention to each other, which my parents had warned us not to do in church! Though we didn't know it, Dr. Watterson was talking about the Good News Singers of America and the trip we went on to Russia. We heard him say "Isn't that right, Al and Patty?" Fortunately, he didn't wait for an answer, because we had no idea what the question was about. But we were two red-faced embarrassed people.

Met and Married

The History Committee used the church newsletter to ask members to tell about meeting and marrying at First Baptist Church. A few responded:

Eloise Young and Pat Spangler dated while members of First Baptist Church and married there in 1948.

Kathy and John Gardner dated while members of First Baptist Church and married June 20, 1982, in Webb Chapel.

Lois McBrayer and Rick Davis met through the Singles Ministry and married at First Baptist Church. They were married during Café Phoenix on a Friday evening. Rev. Perry Holleman officiated.

Susan and "Wee Dee" Evans: Mutual friends tried to interest Susan and "Wee Dee" in each other for a long time. They worked together at Duke Power and then saw each other at the Shelby Nursery, where Wee Dee helped out some and where Susan bought plants. They dated over a period of time and attended First Baptist Church together. In 1988 while Dr. Watterson was preaching, Wee Dee pulled a ring out

In addition to the usual bridesmaids and groomsmen, there were six naval officers in full uniform. The officers formed an arch of swords for the exit of the couple after the ceremony, and the bride received a whack on her bottom as she left.

Romance at First Baptist

Five Generations

Five generations from one Shelby family married at First Baptist Church.

1. Dr. Victor McBrayer married Esther Jane Suttle on April 28, 1880.
2. Their daughter, Montrose McBrayer, married Odis M. Mull on June 12, 1907.
3. Their daughter, Montrose McBrayer Mull, married Earl Meacham on June 8, 1938.
4. Their daughter, Montrose Meacham, married Lacy Ballard on June 12, 1965.
5. Their daughter, Montrose Rebecca Ballard, married Captain Ralph Grady Higgins III on November 6, 1993, in a military ceremony. Rebecca's brother Hank, married Christy Lynn Cullum on October 27, 2001.

I'm My Own Grandpa!

Jeri Mauney and Reggie Ledford met at First Baptist's singles group, dated for a year, and then were married on June 28, 1986, by Dr. Gene Watterson.

Reggie and Jeri with Joyce and Hugh

Jeri's father, Hugh Mauney, was a widower and Reggie's mother, Joyce Ledford, was a widow. Jeri introduced the two to each other at a church recognition dinner, and they began attending church together. On April 4, 1987, Hugh and Joyce were married by Dr. Gene Watterson.

The two weddings created some strange relationships. Jeri became Joyce's step daughter and also her daughter-in-law. Reggie became Hugh's step son as well as his son-in-law. Joyce became Jeri's step mother as well as her mother-in-law. Hugh became Reggie's step father as well as his father-in-law. They simplified the nomenclature with Jeri and Reggie calling Hugh and Joyce their parents, and with Hugh and Joyce calling Jeri and Reggie their children.

Church Organization

Shelby Baptist Church, which later became First Baptist Church of Shelby, was organized in 1847, but that organization has undoubtedly changed as times have changed. Its organization in 2007 is revealed in its Certificate of Incorporation, its By-laws, and its Policies and Procedures.

First Baptist Church is a non-profit corporation. If the church does something that severely damages some person or organization, it can be sued. The members of the church that were involved in bringing about the damage can also be sued, but other members of the church cannot be. Before being incorporated the potential was that every member of the church in such a situation could be sued.

First Baptist Church is controlled by its members in conference. A majority at any church conference can take action that is binding on the church as a whole. The conference can hire and fire personnel and establish by-laws and procedures. It can do these things on its own initiative or upon recommendation of committees, teams, and deacons.

The conference expects members of the ministerial staff to be responsible for the spiritual ministry of the church while the deacons and the administrative coordinator are responsible for the business of the church.

The spiritual ministry of the church is determined and carried out by teams of members under the guidance of the ministerial staff with the approval of the church conference.

The business of the church is determined and carried out by committees of members with the approval of the deacons and the church in conference.

Staff members, team members, committee members, and deacons are all elected by the church conference. Team, committee, and deacon members serve a set number of years (usually three) and are replaced on a staggered basis. Staff members are employees at will.

The normal course of action is for a matter to be suggested by a member or some members, the matter is referred to the appropriate team

of his pocket and gave it to Susan. She asked what it was for and was told it was given in the hope they would spend the next 60 years together. Dr. Watterson married them in Webb Chapel six weeks later. Now each anniversary they decide how many of the 60 years are left for them to be together.

Harold and Polly Causby: Polly Willis had been a widow eight years and Harold Causby had been a widower several months when the Sonshiners planned a trip to see a play at the Flatrock Playhouse. Harold looked so forlorn and lonely at the Wednesday night supper that Polly talked him into signing up for the trip. When they got back, Harold talked Polly into going out with him back to Flatrock "without all the other people" to see another play. A few months later they were married by Rev. Tony Tench at a family wedding in the chapel. Polly said her vows as scripted. Harold said his as scripted but added that Johnny Cash line, "Polly, because you are mine, I walk the line."

Safety and Security Team chair Ed Yarboro serves during VBS

or committee, they make recommendations to the deacons, and the deacons make recommendations to the church in conference. The church conference can then deal with the matter as it sees fit.

The specific duties of committees and teams are set out in the By-laws and the Policy Manual. The By-laws and the Policy Manual also outline how church property may be used. All those by-laws and policies can be altered by the church in conference by following the procedure outlined.

Of course, First Baptist Church committees and teams and the church in conference are guided and assisted by the ministerial staff.

The pastor preaches, teaches, engages in pastoral care, and provides administrative leadership in all areas of church life. He serves as Senior Minister over both the ministerial and the support staffs.

Youth mission team at work in Trinidad

The Minister of Education is responsible for instituting, directing, and coordinating a comprehensive Christian education program, which at the present time includes but is not limited to Sunday School, deaf and special needs, single adults, senior adults, new believers and members, small groups, family ministry, weekday ministry, Marion School ministry, and jail ministry.

The Minister of Music is responsible for instituting, directing, and coordinating a comprehensive music program for people of all ages. He prayerfully prepares plans for worship and the choirs that lead in worship in order to encourage the congregation to enter into the conversation of worship with God each week. Each of the choirs, from preschool to adult, are encouraged and led to be on mission together through the course of the year.

The Minister of Students and Activities is responsible for instituting, directing, and coordinating a program of evangelism, enlistment, and discipleship of students in school grades 6-12, and also coordinating all church-wide activities and functions so as to make maximum use of all church buildings.

The Ministry Coordinator coordinates all secretarial activities required by the church staff, deacons, committees, and teams in order to insure the proper and orderly functions of the church.

The Administrative Coordinator provides financial services and coordinates purchasing, building care, and food services.

The church also employs a publications secretary, an office assistant, a Director of Weekday Ministries, custodians, an organist, a pianist, a keyboard player, a drummer, and a cook, as well as assistants as needed. It also employs teachers in Child Development Center and Mother's Morning Out.

Church Property – Legal Citations

On November 11, 1996, by a deed recorded in Book 119 at page 2101 in the Cleveland County Registrar's office, the trustees of First Baptist Church of Shelby conveyed all church property to the newly created

First Baptist Church of Shelby, N. C., a non-profit corporation. This was done to eliminate the possibility of members being individually responsible for any legal wrongs that might be committed by the church. Since that deed purported to convey all church property, it provides a good picture of real property owned by the church at that time.

The property the church actually uses for church purposes are Tract 1 which refers to a deed in Book H at page 368, Tract 2 which refers to a deed in Book 6F at page 397, Tract 3 which refers to a deed in Book 8R at page 458, Tract 5 which refers to a deed in Book 16N at page 113 and Tract 10 which refers to deeds in Book 16P at page 492, and in Book 1128 at page 1469.

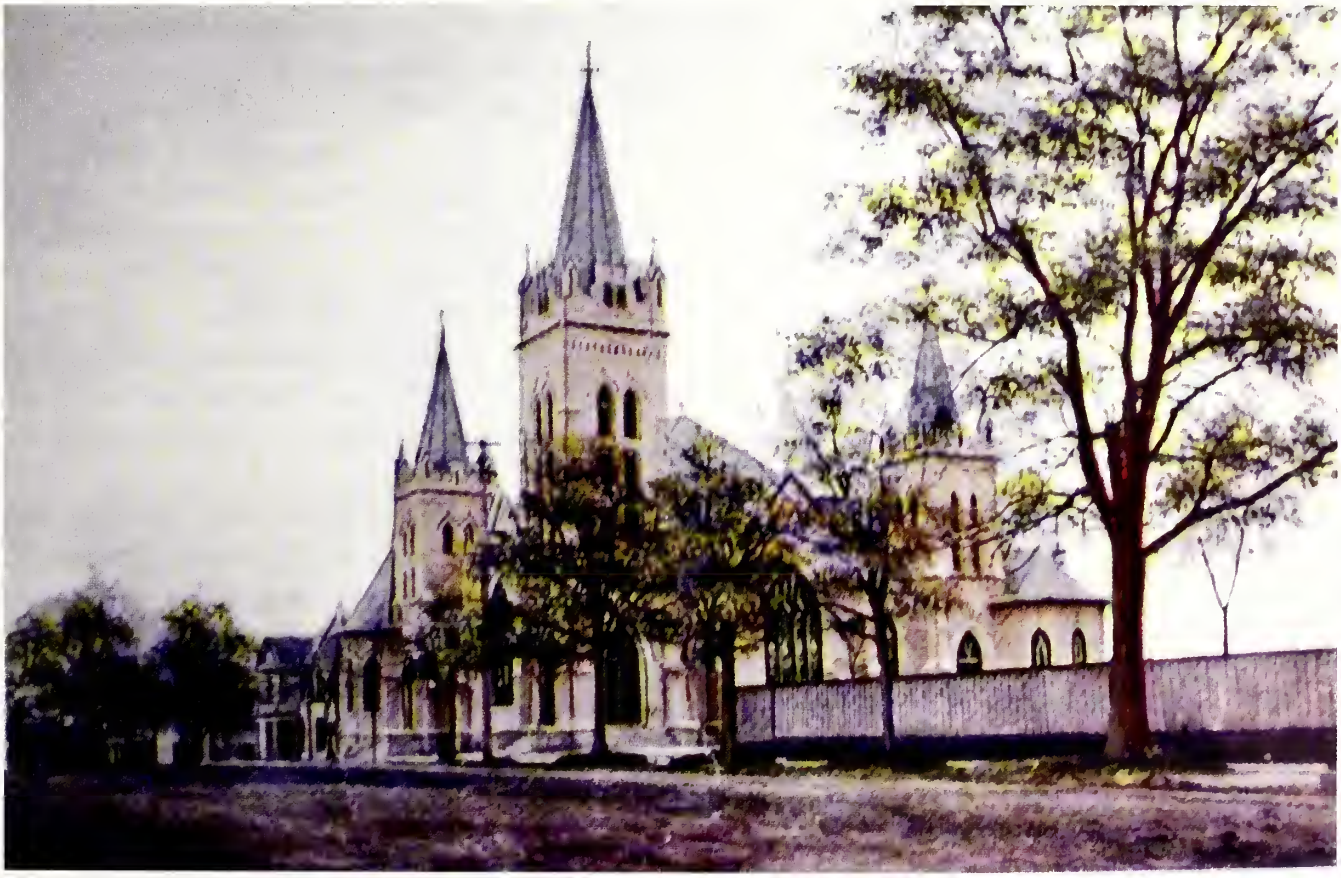
The property that the church owns subject to a life estate to Roland and Lois Leath on Worthington Street is described in Book 14U page 324.

Other tracts of real property referred to in the 1996 deed are Tract 6 which refers to deed in Book 17N at page 862, Tract 7 which refers to deed in Book 10M at page 557, Tract 8 which refers to deed in Book 10M at page 557, Tract 9 which refers to deed in Book 18K at page 706, and Tract 11 which refers to deed in Book 1154 at page 1913. The church is given property from time to time, and the Building and Grounds Committee is charged with recommending its disposal.

All deed references are to the Cleveland County Registry, North Carolina, located in the Register of Deeds office in Shelby.

Building Maintenance

Maintaining the four main buildings and the equipment in them is a constant job and a very expensive one.



Scott Cole and Al Whatley climb spire.
–photo courtesy of The Star

Scott Cole tells of **Al Whatley** and him, in the early 1980's, being hoisted from the center of Lafayette Street by a 118 foot crane in order to reach to the top of the steeple to replace the spires. They found there that the builders had used hand made marbles as bearings to allow the weather vanes to turn. The glass marbles would not rust in the weather. So they decided to replace them with another set of glass marbles since they had worked so well up until then. Pastor Tony remarked at this story, "When the going gets tough, it's always good to know our church has all its marbles!" Scott and Al also replaced the dormers over the windows on the Dale Street side of B-Building. They were lowered by ropes from the roof. In order to get down, though, they repelled to the ground.

In the early 1970's the Dover Activities Building was built, the church auditorium was gutted and enlarged, and the two education buildings were renovated at a cost of $1,245,000.

Also in the 1970's the church paved the parking lot at Sumter and North Lafayette Streets for $2,264, a new Moller organ was purchased for $62,725, the old organ was remodeled for use in Webb Chapel at a cost of $9,330, and a new sound system was installed for $12,981, the stained glass windows were repaired for $28,000, and the church heating system was changed from oil to gas for $2,000.

The big news in 1984 was the deplorable shape of the church buildings. In January 1984 pipes burst in the church auditorium attic damaging the ceiling, walls, pews, and carpet to such an extent that Sunday morning worship services had to be moved to the high school auditorium. Then it became apparent that both education buildings needed new roofs and remodeling. The tower over the auditorium was leaking again and so was the roof of the activities building. The outside brick needed waterproofing. The problems were corrected in 1985 at a cost of $907,600.

Early in the 1990's, the church bought the Washington Street lot across from the Dover Activities Building. The roof of the church sanctuary was leaking again, the Ladies Parlor was refurbished, street lights were installed all around the church at a cost of $900 each, an elevator to the church sanctuary was installed at a cost of $110,000, carillon bells were repaired for $13,500, and playground equipment was purchased for $20,000. In 1995 the new education building (1954) was re-roofed for $183,000, an elevator in that building cost $118,000, and waterproofing cost $70,000.

In 1996 it was determined that even more repairs were needed at a cost of $1,100,000. The other buildings needed new roofs, the sanctuary extension over the alley was unsafe, and so was the sanctuary balcony. Everything needed painting, the kitchen and gym needed to be upgraded, the heating and air needed improvement, and the sanctuary needed refurbishing. Two Sunday morning services every week were held in Webb Chapel during the time repairs were taking place.

In the 2000's the church spent $52,000 for a playground,

$238,000 for a 1994 Prevost 57 passenger bus, $56,000 to put a bus garage on the scout hut property, re-roofed activities building for $145,159, replaced the air for the office for $5,000, and refurbished the organ for $48,000. It cost $25,000 to control the auditorium air so as not to damage the organ. In 2003 the heat and air systems were replaced for $324,000, and the sound system was upgraded for $60,000. The next year the gym was prepared for early services at a cost of $34,199.36, the offices were remodeled for $10,400, and new office security doors cost $6,522. In 2006 new television equipment was purchased for $60,000.

The maintenance costs reported here are just the major ones. Of course, there were numerous minor ones as well.

In summary, the church spent well over a million maintenance dollars in the early 1970's, again in the mid 1980's, again in the mid 1990's, and now in the mid 2000's. It also spent hundreds of thousands between each of these major projects.

First Baptist Church has beautiful historic buildings which provide a challenge to maintain regularly. Even so, these buildings have made a base of ministry operations for the First Baptist family over the past 160 years. Because we believe the church is God's agenda in the world, we are willing to maintain a place where the ministry, service, discipleship, and missions can be encouraged in the heart of Shelby.

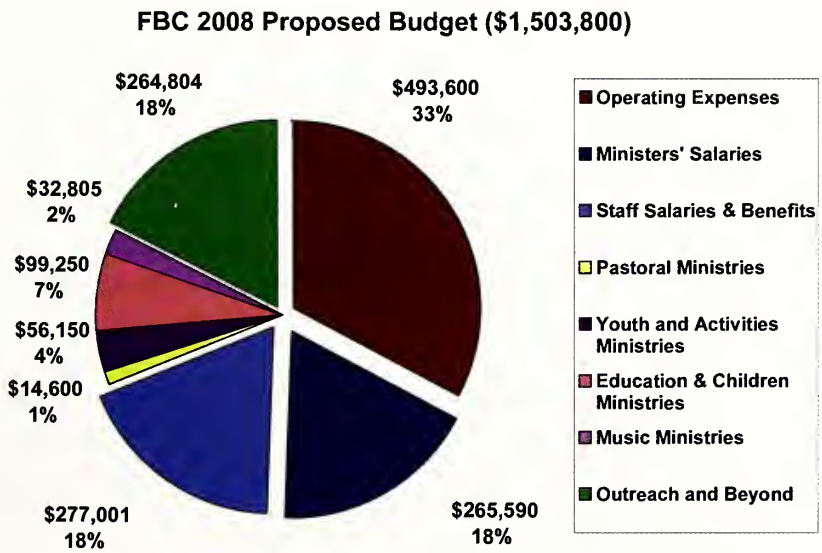
Appraisal of Church Property

A 1996 appraisal of replacement value of the buildings that make up First Baptist Church was $8,741,200. No telling what their replacement value would be in 2007. Considering their architecture and history, they are priceless.

2007 Budget

The budget for First Baptist Church is prepared by the Budget and Finance Committee with the input from the church staff, ministry teams, and committees. The budget for the previous year, the financial experience during the previous year, and new financial needs for the future provide the guidelines for the proposed new budget. The proposed budget goes to the deacons and then to the church in conference for final approval. Once it has been approved, it serves as a financial guide for the church, but it can be amended using the same procedures.

The 2007 budget calls for operating expenses of $488,050. Most of that part of the budget goes for food expense, utilities, church insurance, ongoing maintenance, and service contracts. The biggest service contracts involve heating and air, cleaning the child care center, and cleaning the church.



Pastoral expenses for 2007 are budgeted at $13,800 and cover odds and ends expenses like the pastor's conference expense and mission trips, member assistance, new ministries, and short-term

missions.

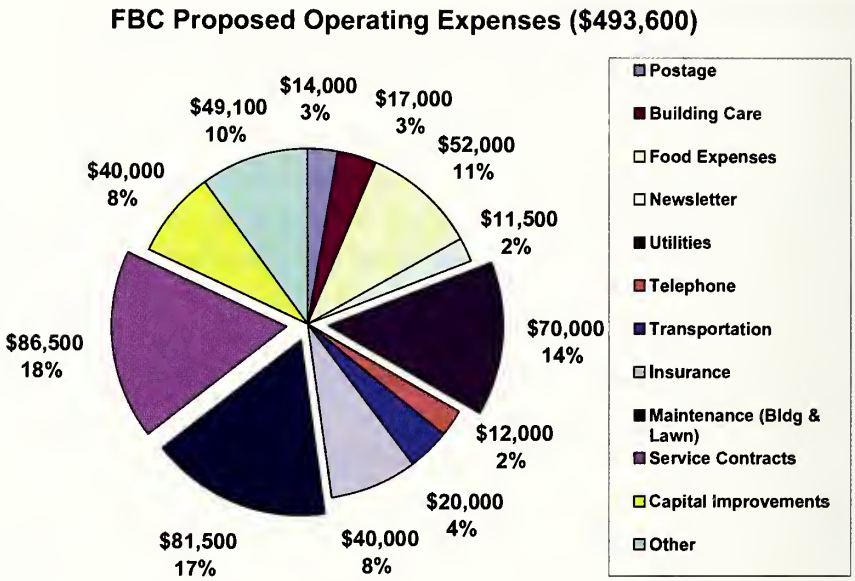
Ministerial compensations are budgeted at $257,854: for pastor $80,222, education $58,204, music $70,522, and youth $48,906. These figures include retirement, insurances, housing allowances, Social Security, and Medicare.

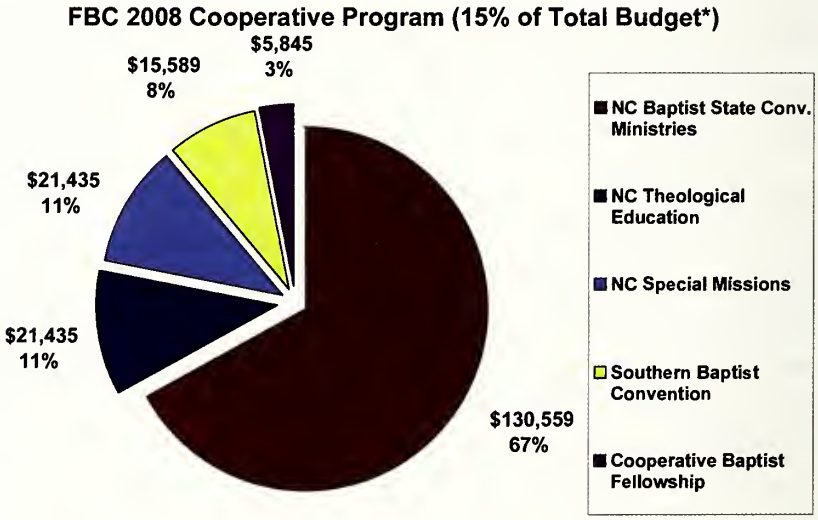
Salaries for 13 support staff total $210,661, with the main ones being the Administrative Coordinator, the Ministry Coordinator, the Publications Secretary, the custodian, and the housekeeper.

In addition to salary, all full-time support staff are budgeted $55,046 in benefits.

Various church ministries carry budget items to help them carry out their ministries, including youth $49,850, children $19,250, education $70,500 (with $34,000 of that for literature), and music $31,770.

Outreach ministry is budgeted at $254,837 and includes the Cooperative Program $188,892, support for the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association $32,400, Habitat for Humanity House $10,000, and three Gardner-Webb University scholarships $13,250, as well as smaller sums for Young Life, Shelby Hispanic Church, Coalition for the Homeless, Jail Ministry, Gideons, American Bible Society, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the Baptist World Alliance.





The total budget for 2007 is $1,453,618. The church expects to receive $1,400,118.01 of that from members giving at the average rate of $26,935.35 per week. The remainder is expected to come from food service paid for by members and food reimbursement from the child care center.

Red & Black

The church found itself "in the red" in 1994 and again in 1996. The Child Development Center was drastically "in the red" in 2000 as the result of a teacher firing and resulting loss of students, but the church absorbed the deficit. In 2001 the church exceeded its budget by $40,000 and tithed that money to missions.

Giving to Others

Members of First Baptist Church give generously to the yearly church budget. They also give generously through other church organizations and projects, and those funds do not go through the church books and are not included in the church budget. Most of the groups contributing in this way do not keep records, so our church historian, Polly Causby, has researched and estimated conservatively in order to give an idea of the FBC outreach giving in 2007 outside the church budget as follows:

Feed the Hungry Christmas celebration

Church-wide offerings include the Christmas Offering for International Missions $50,000, the Easter Offering for North American Missions $20,000, and the fall offering for North Carolina missions $13,000.

Sunday School classes take up offerings estimated at $28,000 and use them to help others. WMU groups give for mission projects each month, which for a year total about $3,900, plus about $260 for homeless lunches.

The youth of the church raise about $19,000 at the auctions and banquets and use the money to help finance their mission trips. In addition they spend many dollars of their own money on mission trips.

Other mission trips involve payments by participating members.

Estimated miscellaneous examples of giving includes:

Three trips to Gulfport	$3,000
Operation Christmas Child shoe box ministry	$7,400
Pack a Trunk gifts for Trinidad	$1,600
Pack a Trunk gifts for Ukraine	$1,200
Pack a Trunk gifts for Malawi	$1,200
Christmas toy gifts for GCCBA	$750
Angel Tree gifts	$3,000
Marion School supplies	$500
School supplies for GCCBA	$500
Pregnancy Resource Center	$300
Benevolent offerings after Lord's Supper	$2,000
Habitat for Humanity house (beyond budget)	$20,000
George & Helen Byrd Foundation	$10,000
Student uniforms	$3,000
Greatest Treat Festival Candy	$500

Church members regularly contribute food for bereavement needs at the church and in the homes of the bereaved. The 40 Days of Community groups all had outreach projects and some still meet and participate in projects. Most church members support outreach organizations like the Red Cross, the Salvation Army,

Campus Crusade, and organizations devoted to elimination of various diseases.

As previously outlined, First Baptist Church has a budget for outreach ministry which was $254,837 in 2007. The pastoral budget for that year includes another $2000 for pastor's mission trips and $1500 for short term missions. The youth ministry budget for 2007 includes $10,000 for youth mission trips and $2500 for youth mission projects. Non-budgeted money for personal ministries given through the church offerings came to $134,282.61 in 2006 and would be about the same for 2007.

The church budget provides over $270,000 for outreach ministry, and church offerings provide another $134,000 for personal ministries. The outreach offerings and gifts given through other church groups total more than an estimated $200,000. Members of First Baptist Church are known to give generously of their money and time to individuals and groups devoted to serving those who need to be served in and out of the community.

It would probably not be an exaggeration to say that each year members of First Baptist Church give over a million dollars to others, over and above what it takes to support the rest of the church's ministries.

First Baptist Church's Web Site: fbcshelby.org

First Baptist Church had internet access before it had a web site. While Dr. Canoy was minister here, David Grose began a web site for the church. David used his own domain to create a church site that gave information about the history of the church, the departments in the church, pictures of activities, the ministers and staff, and contact information for the ministers. At this time computers were just coming into full use and the church did not have a way to create electronic files of the *Informer* for David to upload onto the web site. This site continued for several years with David as "web master."

After Andy Roby came to FBC several changes took place with the web site. The church decided to subscribe to a service that helps us create our own web site supervised by staff members. David Grose had used his own domain for the site.

There are links to the following:

- Home: the opening page to the First Baptist Church web site.
- About Us: gives general information about the church, services, and mission opportunities.
- Following Jesus: tells how to be saved and become a Christian.
- Staff: pictures and contact information for each minister and staff person.
- Worship: explains first worship and sanctuary worship differences.
- Music: gives all the opportunities for music participation.
- Youth: also gives all the opportunities for youth participation and pictures.
- Weekday Child Care: gives information about Child Development Center and Mom's Morning Out Opportunities.
- Singles/College: explains *Fusion* for 18-35 and *Café Phoenix* for 35 +.
- Adult Ministry: adult Christian growth studies, Sunday school class groups.
- Deaf Ministry: opportunities for the deaf of Shelby and surrounding area.
- Weekly Calendar: gives the full schedule of worship opportunities.
- Events: an actual calendar page with activities of the church.
- Photos from FBC: photos from recent 160th celebrations, etc.
- Prayer List: lists prayer concerns in the Open Window and Macedonian call.
- Contact Us: a way to contact the church or someone in particular.
- Video Clip Portal: video clips offered through youtube.com

The current "web master," Dr. Andy Roby, makes changes frequently. The Home page is changed weekly, but there are daily updates on things like mission trips or daily activities such asVBS. People could read a daily update on Andy's 'blog' and see new pictures.

Photos are used generously throughout the website and a photo gallery has recently been added.

The church uses the web site in two ways. First it is a way the church has of communication with the members and vice-versa. And secondly it introduces the church to people who are not members.

Contact through the site is often erratic. There are more 'hits' when something important is happening, of course, such as mission trips or anniversary events or VBS. Dr. Roby stated that by using Google Analytics, he learned that this site has about one thousand hits per week, 400 of which are repeat hits. That means 600 people are being ministered to each week!

When our youth are on mission trips, every effort is made to upload photos and comments so that parents back in Shelby are able to have daily prayer and praise reminders through the week. When we have built our Habitat for Humanity houses, the website has been a tool for chronicling and sharing the work with others.

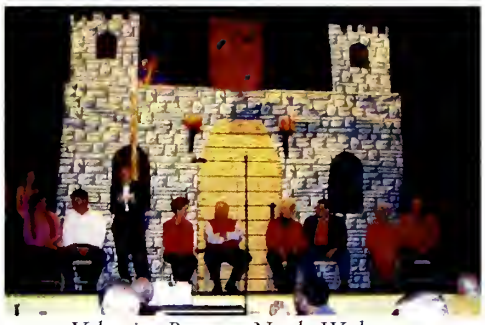
Who would have thought 160 years ago that there would be computers and the Internet? Who could have imagined this church utilizing them to do mission work almost world wide with our web site! Well, it happened – and what a future is coming!

Fellowship

Every Sunday School class, every WMU group, every choir, and most other church organizations carry out the serious purposes for which they are organized. They also have socials from time to time.

Fellowship is one of the purposes of the church, and while we might often have fun doing it, it too is serious business – without it we would not stay in touch with each other!

Each year for the NFL's Super Bowl football game, members gather in the gym for the *Souper Bowl of Caring*. Each member brings "pot luck" soups to share and other goodies to go with the soup. Everyone contributes one dollar per person and that money is used in local feeding ministries to encourage those without food. On Tuesday before Thanksgiving the congregation gathers



Valentine Banquet Newly Wed game

Challenger 3 racing

Church-wide summer end picnic

Annual egg hunt

for a traditional style Thanksgiving meal. They bring along to this feast canned goods and new toys to be given for use by the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association's Toy Store at Christmastime. During the Advent Season, the congregation gathers on a Wednesday evening for the annual staff cooked steak dinner during which the ministers serve the tables and lead the group in some Christmas fun. In February there is a Valentine Banquet sponsored by the youth ministry with the proceeds going to youth missions and camps for the following summer. The Saturday before Easter brings an Egg Hunt for children prior to which they hear the pastor tell the story of the resurrection and after which they enjoy the hunt for the eggs – a symbol of new life!

One of the best fellowship times occurs every Wednesday evening when the church furnishes a good meal at a very reasonable price just before prayer meeting, choir, and youth group meetings.

The fellowships enable church members to know each other better, work together better on church business, and enjoy good food together – a true Baptist tradition!

Transportation (Vehicles)

In the 1970's, the church purchased four old school buses. Church members were recruited to drive these buses on designated routes and transport people to the church for Sunday services. These worn out buses were in poor repair, and after a period of time this practice was discontinued.

Preparing to depart on mission to Germany with prayer partners standing by

In January 1984 the church purchased two vans to use for transporting youth groups, senior adults, and others involved in various church activities. The daycare center also used these vans to transport elementary school students who enrolled in after-school care.

In December 1983 the Royster family gave FBC a 45 passenger Greyhound bus that had been reconditioned. They maintained the bus for the church for 16 years. Jackie Millsaps, one of the bus drivers, tells the story of driving a group on the Greyhound bus to Branson, MO. When he attempted to drive the bus up one of the Branson hills, it would not pull the hill. He said that he had to back down the hill three times and finally made a "running start" that helped the bus maneuver the incline. When he got to the top, the traffic light was red, but he just kept on going. Luckily, they made it without an accident.

The church kept this bus until June 2000 when it was sold and the money was applied toward the purchase of a 1994 Prevost coach – cost about $235,000. This bus is used for youth groups, Sunday school classes, seniors, and other FBC groups for a variety of activities that are considered a church ministry. Bob

Dills, who has driven the bus and supervised bus maintenance for years, says the bus averages about 18,000 to 20,000 miles per year. When not in use, this bus is housed in a covered structure inside the fenced area behind the Boy Scout building on Washington Street.

In 2003 the two vans that had been bought in 1984 were sold and the money was used toward the purchase of a 15 passenger 2003 Ford diesel minibus which cost about $55,000. This vehicle is used to transport small groups for church activities.

The FBC bus ministry as it exists in 2007 began in 1984 when the old bus began operation. Bob Dills was Minister of Music at that time and volunteered to see that the bus was maintained. He has been a volunteer in charge of seeing that church vehicles are properly maintained ever since, even though he retired as Minister of Music in 2000.

Bob Dills and Gene Watterson receive keys from Kathie Burgin, Brock Taylor, David Royster, III, David Royster, Jr., and Ann & Jim Taylor in January, 1984.

Bob has driven the church vehicles himself and has recruited and trained other drivers as needed. A driver must get a commercial driver's license, pass a physical, and be approved by the church's insurance carrier. Drivers for the church have included professionals such as Joe Carroll (now deceased) and Jackie Millsaps (for 20 years or more), as well as amateurs like Bob Dills, Glenn Davenport, Skip Warrick, Tommy Young, Keith Hartley, and Rex Morris.

On 9/11/01, Jackie Millsaps was driving a bus load of senior members to Pennsylvania and beyond when the terrorists took over an airplane that crashed less than 100 miles away.

Celebrating 160 Years on Mission Together

For the first 160 days of 2007 leading to the 160th anniversary of First Baptist's ministry, the church celebrated together. The celebration got underway on the first Sunday of January with a churchwide birthday party fellowship. The members sang "Happy Birthday to Us!" from twelve areas where they had assembled based upon their individual birth months. These twelve teams worked together throughout the evening getting to know one another and accomplishing the silly tasks given them to see which team would emerge the winner of the night.

The celebration continued with an emphasis on discipleship and ministry from February to April during *40 Days of Community: First Baptist Church Prepares for the Next 160 Years*. During these 40 days, small groups and classes learned how they were "better together" in ministry and service.

April brought the church to two more celebration opportunities. During the *On Mission Celebration: First Baptist Celebrating 160 Years on Mission* the church joined with 20 or so other churches of the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association in welcoming a host of missionaries to share with us. These missionaries spoke in the church from Sunday through Wednesday bringing the challenge of their fields of service to our doors in Shelby.

Next, the church was blessed by the visit of internationally renowned church music composer Mark Hayes who led the choir in a choral clinic on Friday and Saturday. During the Sunday morning service, Mark directed the choir in the debut presentation of an anthem he composed upon the commissioning of the church for the 160th anniversary entitled "Our Joyful Declaration." On Sunday evening, the church received Mark Hayes for a concert of choir pieces and piano arrangements to conclude the composer festival.

May 2006 found First Baptist hosting the North Carolina Baptist Singers and Orchestra for a concert to celebrate the church's anniversary. This group of music ministers from across the state brought a blessing to the church on this Monday evening of worship.

The 160 days to celebrate 160 years came to its culmination on June 10, 2007, as Sunday School started at 9:30 a.m. (15 minutes early) and dismissed in time for members and guests to crowd into the sanctuary to begin worship at 10:30 a.m.

The service opened with the First Worship praise band and team of singers leading the congregation in contemporary worship music.

Following a welcome by the Pastor, the service continued with a children's moment, a scripture reading, traditional hymns, and responsive readings that ended with the church's purposes as a **REAL** church:

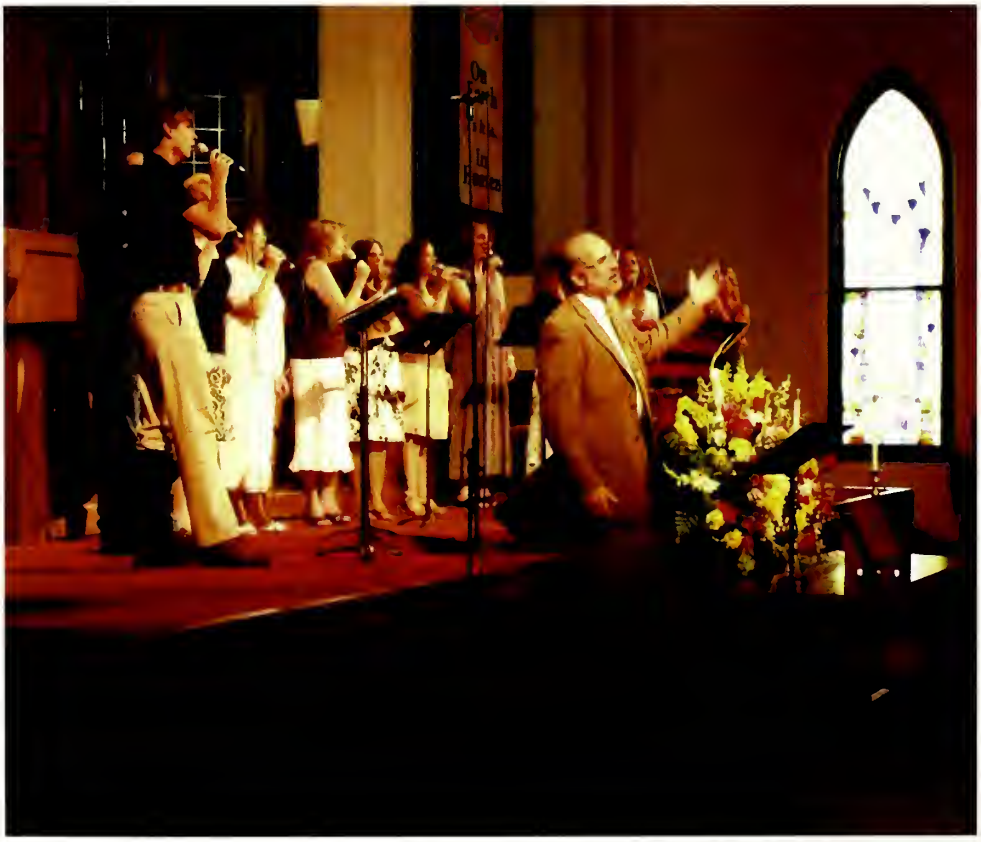
R – Reaching people separated from Jesus.

E – Equipping believers for service.

A – Applying God's Word to our daily lives.

L – Loving God and our neighbors.

Then Mark Cabaniss, who grew up in First Baptist Church and now heads Shawnee Press, a large religious music publishing company, led the sanctuary choir and orchestra in a hymn anthem written by Mark especially for the church's 160th birthday entitled "Our God is Real."



First Worship team in Anniversary Celebration

Our God is Real

Words and Music by Mark Cabaniss, Arranged by Joseph M. Martin

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We live in a world of darkness and of light.
Tomorrow is uncertain, so we walk by faith and not by sight.
But this we know, from age to age we stand
On the Solid Rock Who is the Great "I Am."

We see Him at work as seasons come and go.
We hear His mighty voice as thunder rolls and rivers flow.
Lord of the skies and Lord of the seas,
There are those who doubt Your presence here but this we believe:

Our God is light and grace.
He is holy; He is just.
May His Kingdom come and His will be done,
As we share the love we feel.
We want the world to know this truth:
Our God is real! Our God is real!

Our God is strength and peace.
He is mighty; He is love.
We will count the cost; we will reach the lost;
We will share our faith until
All the world has heard this song of hope.
Our God is real! Our God is real.
Alleluia, our God is real.

Sing, Christians, lift your voice.
Allelu, our God is real.
Before His throne rejoice;
Alleluia! Amen!
We gladly bring our praise.
He gives us life each day.
He is the truth, the way.
Alleluia! Amen!

Come, lift your hearts on high
Allelu, our God is real.
Let praises fill the sky.
Alleluia! Amen!
On Heaven's blissful shore,
His goodness we'll adore,
Singing forevermore,
Allelu, our God is real!

The Sanctuary Choir presented an anthem which it had presented a few weeks earlier when its composer, Mark Hayes, led them.

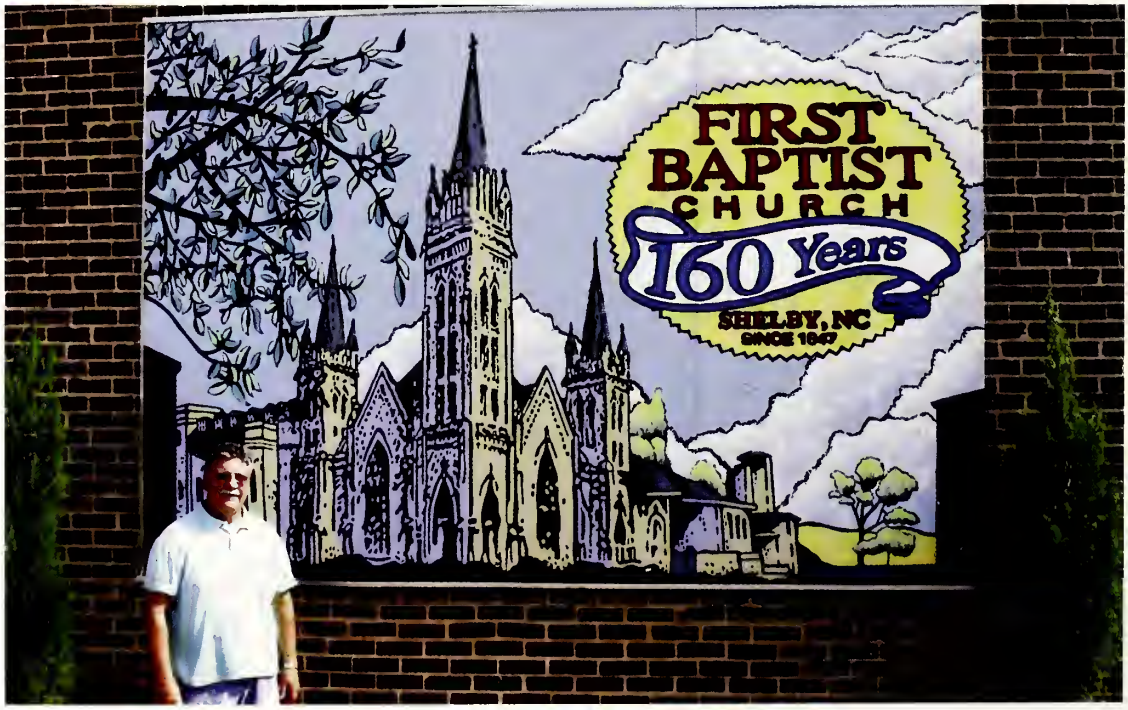
Our Joyful Declaration

Words by John Parker, Music by Mark Hayes

Commissioned to the glory of God and in celebration of the 160th anniversary of First Baptist Church. 2007.

How great is God's kingdom! How marvelous and grand!
Measureless in majesty! Forever it shall stand
How can it be that we, God's people,
Are chosen to declare God's wonders to the earth?
Unfathomable!
That the Creator could so love the created!
Wonderful gift! Matchless reward!
The indescribable joy we have
To declare the greatness of the Lord!
Sing out, O church of God, your joyful hymn proclaim.
Shout it with thankful hearts, the greatness of God's name.
Spread good news everywhere, to every nation.
This is our grateful song, our joyful declaration.
We are one part of a holy heritage, knitted by a common thread of grace.
For two thousand years we have carried God's message.
Come add your voice to this legacy of faith!
Sing out, O church of God....

At the close of the anthem, a child, Eden Lewis, was baptized.



Allen Griffin stands with his artwork in Uptown Shelby.

Celebrating 160 years on mission together "beyond the stained glass windows"

Pastor Tony Tench's sermon challenged the congregation not to rest on their laurels but to take the 160th year celebration as a wake up call to serve God more diligently "in the next 160 years or until Jesus comes again!"

The Shelby Police Department blocked off North Lafayette Street for the whole block which the church fronts. Volunteers set up tables and chairs and a meal of beef tenderloin, green beans, broccoli salad, cantaloupe and onion salad, bread, beverage, and brownies. Everyone ate and visited to their heart's content.

First Baptist Church really knows how to celebrate!

The 160th Anniversary Quilt

Dorothy Young headed a group of 29 members who created a quilt to help celebrate the 160th anniversary of First Baptist Church. The idea was conceived during the 40 Days of Community study in March 2007, and volunteers were signed up at the 40 Days of Community Ministry Fair. The purpose was to assemble as many blocks as possible that represent the mission and ministry of the church. The blocks at the top of the quilt incorporate the church's mission:

Reaching people separated from Jesus.
Equipping believers for service.
Applying God's Word to daily life.
Loving God and our neighbors.

The other blocks on the quilt represent many avenues of mission and ministry of the church. Each block reflects the commitment of the individual who contributed it and the diversity of contributions necessary to carry out the calling of the church. After church volunteers completed their part of the quilt, the co-owners of Alley Quilts completed the quilting as a gift to the church. It is displayed in C-building on the ground floor.

Christian Symbols at First Baptist Church

International Flags

Polly Willis Causby and Rachel Schenck talked from time to time about how nice it would be to have a flag for every country where Southern Baptists have missionaries. In 1992 they decided to do something about it. They spent countless hours researching and sewing the flags and recruited George Byrd to make flag poles. By the first Sunday in December, the flags were ready, so many, many volunteers were recruited to carry them down the aisles at that morning worship service.

Every year since 1992 the Parade of Flags has taken place at a December Sunday morning worship service during the Week of Prayer for International Missions. As the flags are processed by members of the congregation, the choir leads the congregation in a hymn of declaration of the love of God for all the peoples of the world. The flags are carried down the center aisle and onto the stage. It serves as an impressive reminder of how many Baptist missionaries are serving around the world.

In 1993 Polly and Rachel and George added black flags to represent the unreached nations of the world. That too is impressive

Children's Sunday School class lighting the Advent candle

Worship Banners

In 1994 Sally Jones donated money to the choir as a memorial to J. T. Jones, her deceased husband who had been in the choir. Minister of Music Bob Dills decided that banners would be appropriate to proclaim the many names of God and to celebrate events on the church calendar. Professionally made banners turned out to be prohibitively expensive, so Bob asked Polly Willis Causby to see what she could do.

Polly recruited Opal Morris, Susan Brown, and Nancy Kennedy to help her plan and construct banners for the Easter service. They are still in use on special occasions.

Phyllis Wortman has interacted with the church staff in recent years to design the graphics for banners for various events and ministries.

Tenebrae and Intinction

With Palm Sunday of 2003, the congregation was introduced to an old way of receiving the Lord's Supper. That year began what would be a series of passion services on Palm Sunday including the Tenebrae Service, or "service of darkness," which allows the extinguishing of candles as scripture lessons and songs mark the way of our Lord to the cross. For that year's Tenebrae Service, Allen Griffin, a Sanctuary Choir member and local potter, was commissioned to fashion twelve bread bowls and twelve chalices. Small pieces of bread filled each bowl and the wine for the supper was poured into each chalice. At the proper point in the service, the Deacons stood in pairs around the Sanctuary and church members came to the pair nearest their seat to take a piece of bread and dip it in the wine for eating as they went back to their seats. This method of receiving communion is known as "intinction" as the word is built off the Latin word meaning "to dip" or "to baptize." This is an ancient practice in the history of the church but was then a new practice for the First Baptist church family. It is the method regularly employed during the church's *First Worship* service.

"Hanging of the Green" service

Stained Glass Windows

The stained glass windows in the sanctuary of First Baptist Church are works of art that present a spiritual message.

The windows are in the Tiffany style and were designed and installed in the new 1910 sanctuary by Payne-Spiers Studio of Patterson, NJ. They cost the church $1,300, which was a lot of money in those days. Each time the windows have needed to be repaired, it has cost the church thousands of dollars more that the original acquisition cost. For example, in 2007 it cost over $45,000 to repair and reframe just two of the windows.

Dove and Twig window

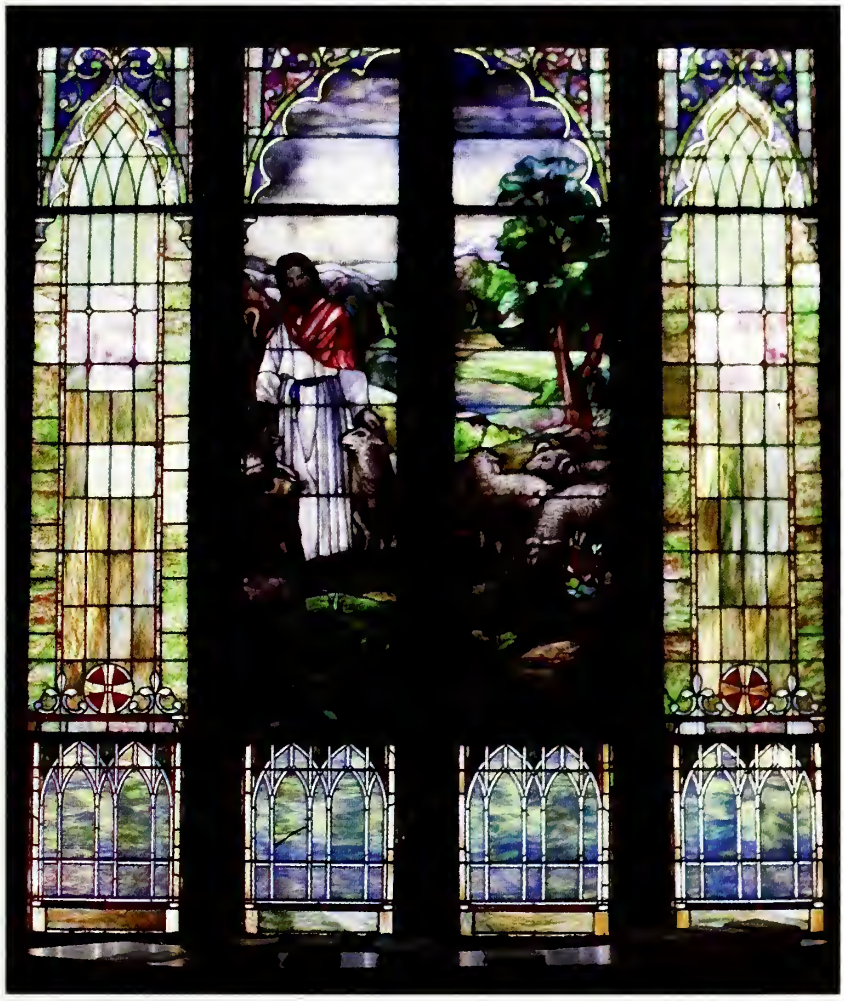
All of the windows contain a common tri-pattern of glass representative of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in whose presence we gather for worship. Each of the windows also features a grapevine with beautiful clusters of grapes taking us back to our Lord's words in John 15:1-5. Jesus said, "I am the vine and you are the branches. They who abide in me and I in them bring forth much fruit. But without me you can do nothing."

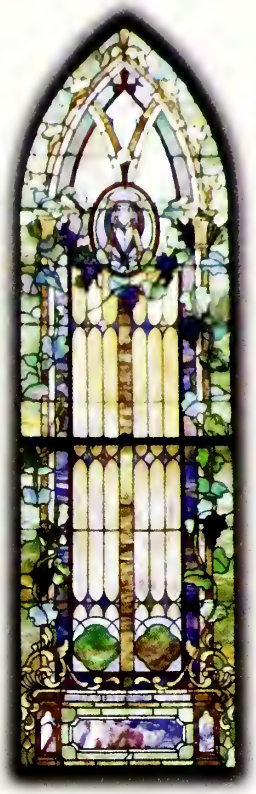
The Dove and Olive Twig window on the south wall of the church depicts the dove bringing a twig to Noah indicating that dry land was appearing after the flood (Genesis 8:6-11a). This symbol reminds us of God's provision of salvation. The Dove, too, is our assurance of the presence of the Holy Spirit even as he descended upon Jesus at his baptism.

The Resurrected Lord Jesus window on the south wall at the prayer room shows the resurrected Jesus in a white robe, raising a scarred hand to bless Mary, calling her by name, assuring her of the fact that he is alive again, and commanding her to tell others (John 20:10-18).

The Alpha and Omega window on the south wall reminds those who see it that Jesus is the first and the last "who is, who was, and who is to come" (Revelation 1:8). The order is important. Jesus ***is*** present with us. He ***was*** active in the past with all his power.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd window





Alpha and Omega window

And, He ***will be*** our hope for all that the future brings.

The New Life in Christ window, on the south wall, features Easter lilies on each end to point to new life through the resurrected Lord (2 Corinthians 5:17). Between the lilies are two other panels. The first, Cross and Crown, remembers Jesus' sacrifice on the cross (1 Peter 3:18) as well as His Lordship of our lives (Luke 14:25-25). The next panel includes a Bible and Torch indicating that God's Word is a light guiding us (Psalm 119). Thus, new life in Christ begins at the cross with our confession of sin, moves to follow the order of the resurrected Lord, learns from the Bible, and then lives to light our witness in the world.

The Open Bible window, and the Lamp window near it, in the vestibule reminds us of how a Bible used every day gives us help in everything we do in life (2 Timothy 3:16).

Jesus, the Good Shepherd window on the west wall of the vestibule depicts Jesus and His sheep – that's us (John 10). The window presents sheep standing alone, hungry, cut off from Jesus, and facing away from the Shepherd, along with a young, dependent lamb. These positions of the sheep call those who see them to consider where they stand with the Lord. He looks to care for all of us whatever our situation might be.

The Lyre window, also in the vestibule, reminds us that we can be joyful in our faith and worship Him with music (Psalm 150).

The windows over the Lafayette Street and Campbell Street doors include what can be seen as a Plumb Line. Jesus is a plumb line by which we are able to keep our lives straight and in line with God's will (Isaiah 28:17). With each departure beneath these windows, the plumb line challenges us to go and be God's difference in the world by way of justice for others and righteousness for Him!

There are two other windows in this original collection that are not so easily accessible for view but have their special meanings nonetheless. One is the Anchor Cross window that is not visible from inside the building but can only be seen upon entering the Dale Street alley. The anchor cross was found in the catacombs that made for hiding places of early Christians under persecution. It refers to Hebrews 6:19, a biblical book from the early days of persecution, where the words anchor and hope point to Jesus. This window was in the original 1910 configuration of the walls of the Sanctuary but was moved to its current location during the renovations several decades later.

Lyre Window

The last of the windows is the Faith, Hope, Charity window and depicts an open Bible along with the inscription "faith, hope, charity." This window recalls Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church and the call to remember that "faith, hope, and love abide, but the greatest of these is love." During the renovation of the Sanctuary, this window was auctioned to church members and was purchased by Rose T. Hamrick, the wife of Dr. John C. Hamrick, Sr. The window was displayed in their home for many years, and today each half of the window is with their two daughters.

The Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane painting rounds out the visual calls to worship in the First Baptist sanctuary by reminding us of the enormous sacrifice Jesus was making for us and our own lack of appreciation for it (John 20:11-18).

This information was included in a tour of the sanctuary windows led by pastor Tony Tench on July 30, 2006.

What happens on the church premises equips believers for service through Bible study, worship, and fellowship to reach out to those who are separated from Jesus. What is done beyond the stained glass windows is what First Baptist Church is all about and what it has been about for these last 160 years.

Open Bible window

Faith, Hope, Charity window

Resurrected Lord Jesus window

Plumb Line windows

New Life in Christ Windows:
Cross and Crown, Torch and Bible, Easter Lillies

Epilogue

History and "herstory" tell us where we have been, but it also tells us where we are and maybe where we are going.

Our church has been around for 160 years. Membership grew from a handful to over 2000 during the 1930's and continued at that level through World War II and, in fact, until the 1970's. Membership has declined since then and in 2007 it is half of what it was at one time.

Why is this? We live in a small town in the heart of the Bible Belt. There were not many churches back then, and our community did not have many recreational opportunities. Our church was our religious and social center where we gathered with like-minded people.

But our world changed. First Baptist Church helped start other churches in neighborhoods in and around Shelby. Our downtown church was no longer anywhere close to being the only one in town. People found it more convenient to attend the church nearest them.

Television, movies, newspapers, and the fact that we became a mobile society with people moving in and out of Shelby have made for a cultural disconnect with the church at large on the part of some as well as seeing employment opportunities taking others out of town.

Church life-cycle studies show that with their second generation of life (age 40), churches on average decline in attendance by 2 percent per year. Eighty percent of American church attendance is found in congregations that are more than 40 years old (*REV*!, March 2008, p. 57). That being so, the older we are as a congregation the more we need to focus on spiritual renewal that keeps us focused on the power of the New Testament church. The testimony of the New Testament is that God's church grows as it follows Jesus into the world in the power of the Spirit!

It is interesting to note that as church membership has declined the number of paid staff at the church has increased. Maybe we wanted the church to offer more things to interest us, and we were more inclined to let the professionals carry the load than to volunteer to carry the load ourselves.

It is also interesting to note that with only half as many members we were giving more and more dollars to or through the church. Of course, it took more and more to provide for staff and to build and maintain the buildings. But we were also giving more and more to missions.

First Baptist has always been interested in missions. In the 1800's we gave to missions and sent missionaries to China. In the 1900's we started other churches, supported Gardner-Webb University, supported missionaries appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, sent youth and adults on mission trips, and encouraged and supported individual members called to short-term, or long-term, missionary service around the world as well as in this community.

Our missionary zeal has increased as our numbers have decreased. Given the fact that the New Testament church grew spiritually and numerically out of its faithfulness to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, we know that as we continue in that zeal we will see God's power at work to strengthen his church known as First Baptist Church of Shelby both inside the fellowship as well as beyond the stained glass windows.

We have had a glorious past as we have followed God's direction With God as our guide, we will have a glorious future. What a story that will be. To God alone be the glory.

–J. A. West, First Baptist Church, Shelby

Lists for Historical Record

Pastors

James M. Webb .....06-19-1847 – 12-23-1849
M. C. Barnett.....12-31-1849 – 11-30-1850
01-22-1886 – 12-31-1869
Wade Hill .....01-01-1851 – 12-31-1852
02-10-1860 – 12-31-1886
01-01-1873 – 12-31-1874
A. J. Cansler .....01-01-1853 – 12-31-1857
Thomas Dixon .....01-1858 – 12-1859
E. A. Crawley.....01-01-1861 – 02-15-1863
09-03-1865 – 01-01-1866
Tillman R. Gaines.....02-15-1863 – 09-03-1865
Needham B. Cobb .....01-01-1870 – 12-31-1872
A. L. Stough .....01-01-1875 – 12-31-1879
J. A. White .....03-15-1880 – 08-26-1880
W. A. Nelson .....08-26-1880 – 09-30-1883
R. D. Mallary.....10-01-1883 – 01-01-1884
W. B. Bussy .....01-01-1884 – 09-02-1885
W. H. Strickland.....11-01-1885 – 06-27-1887
J. M. McManaway.....11-15-1887 – 06-01-1890
G. P. Hamrick.....07-01-1890 – 02-01-1892
J. L. Sproles .....02-01-1892 – 03-25-1894
J. D. Hufham .....05-01-1894 – 10-01-1896
R. F. Tredway.....02-28-1897 – 12-12-1902
W. D. Hubbard .....01-11-1903 – 02-14-1904
M. E. Parrish .....02-24-1904 – 11-01-1908
Charles Jenkins.....04-03-1909 – 10-31-1911
Lewis Swope.....01-01-1912 – 10-29-1916
Lee White .....03-01-1917 – 06-15-1918
J. Marcus Kester.....04-15-1919 – 12-31-1922
Robert Lemmons.....03-01-1923 – 09-01-1925
Zeno Wall.....10-01-1925 – 02-01-1948
Harlan Harris.....03-21-1948 – 11-30-1953
John Lawrence.....02-17-1954 – 06-30-1964
Forrest C. Feezor - Interim.....09-1964 – 03-1965
Joseph McClain.....04-18-1965 – 10-31-1968
Gene Watterson .....07-27-1969 – 01-14-1996
Wayne Stacy - Interim .03-03-1996 – 02-23-1997
Robert Canoy .....02-24-1997 – 08-13-2000
Tony Tench.....11-18-2000 - present

Education Directors/Ministers

Horace Easom, Director of Religious Education and Music .....08-05-1928 – 09-01-1934
08-01-1936 – 06-01-1947
Harlan Harris, Assistant Pastor/ Education Director.....01-1948 – 04-04-1948
Miss Lucille Welch, Director of Religious Education ..01-05-1949 – 08-18-1949
Roland Leath, Educational Director and Music Director.....01-01-1950 – 01-1973
Bob Riddle..... 1975 – 1977
Billy Cooper..... 1978 – 1988
Michael Johnson ..... 1989 – 1992
Steve Zimmerman.....1992 - 01-31-1998
Tony Tench.....07-01-1998 – 11-19-2000
Perry Holleman..... 10-15-01 – present

Ministers of Music

Paid Directors of Music since 1912

E. A. (Ezra) Ruppe .....09-1912 – 10-15-1912
08-25-1920 – 08-1921
Harry M. Pippin .....08-24-1924 – 10-01-1927
J. O. Reynolds .....11-20-1927 – 05-1928
Horace Easom .....08-05-1928 – 09-01-1934
08-01-1936 – 06-01-1947
Harold C. Seefeldt..... 11-1934 – 1936
Joe D. Hamrick .....07-1947 – 12-1949
Roland Leath.....01-01-1950 – 01-1966
John Bascom Ward .....01-23-1966 – 10-27-1966
Van H. Ramsey ..... 01-1967 – 1974
Eddie Rackley..... 1975 – 1978
Bob Decker.....Interim
Bob Dills ..... 1979 – 2000
Andy Roby.....2001 – present

Youth Directors/Ministers

James B. Sides.....06-01-1958 – 08-23-1959
Carole Pearson (First full time paid Youth Director) .....07-1960 – 12-1966
Melvyn Lee Doughty.....05-22-1967
Richard Tate ..... 05-01-1972 – 07-01-73
Glenn Davenport ..... 02-1974 – 1996
Peter West .....03-1996 – 02-1997
Eric Shamblin..... 10-1997 – 1998
Carol Ann Hoard.....12-1998 – present

Church Secretaries

Ruth Moss Easterling.....01-01 – 1935
Mabel Ruth Harrell Senterfitt .....12-05 – 1939
Beverly Clark Hamrick .....09-1941 – 12-1946
Mary Sue Thompson..... 1947 – 12-1978
Terry McIntyre.....01-01-1979 – 02-01-1993
Brenda Blevins.....02-01-1993 – 10-18-1996
Dianne Travis..... 10-1996 – 2003
Dianne Travis – Ministry Coordinator.....2003 – present

Education Secretaries

Annie Lee Ledford Williams..... 1950 – 1955
Doris Palmer .....1955 – 08-01-1959
Doris Baldwin ..... 1959 – 08-1960
Anita Stone Guay ..... 1960 – 1965
Ginny Spears..... 1965 – 1975
Rhonda Lytle..... 1975 – 1980
Brenda Blevins.....10-10-1980 – 02-01-1993
Barbara Toms .....02-01-1993 – 12-08-1995
Gail Holland.....12-04-1995 – 10-18-1996
Lynn Kahue.....01-29-1997 – 03-20-1998

Publications Secretaries

Charlotte Grier .....09-04-1998 – 11-14-2003
Cynthia Roberts.....01-06-2004 – 02-16-2007
Dianne Spangler .....05-01-2007 – present

Financial Secretaries

Mary Sue Thompson..... 1974 – 12-1978
Terry McIntyre.....01-01-1978 – 1980
Phyllis Teal ..... 1980 – 1981
Ann Riley..... 1981 – 1982
Debbie Smith .....12-1982 – 05-1983
Pat Smedley.....05-19-1983 – 12-09-1994
Brenda Blevins.....12-22-1994 – 10-18-1996
Gail Holland.....10-18-1996 – 1998
Gail Adams.....11-24-1997 – 2003
Gail Adams – Administrative Coordinator.....2003 – present

Youth and Music Secretaries

Linda Petty
Dee Miller, Youth and Music
Melba McWhirter, Education, Youth and Music..... 1959 – 1963
1968 – 1970
Anita Stone, Education and Youth .... 1960 – 1965
Kathy Hudson, Youth
Terry McIntyre, Youth and Music .....01-01-1978 – 12-1978
Dianne Travis, Youth, Music, Senior Adults, Activities ..... 1979 – 1996

Office Assistant

Sandra Bonner .....07-28-2003 – present

Business Administrators

Ken Crawley ..... 1976 – 1980
Archie Mathis.....09-02-1996 – 1999
Robert Dimmick.....01-04-2000 – 2002
Gail Adams,
Administrative Coordinator.....2003 – present
Dianne Travis,
Ministry Coordinator .....2003 – present

Maintenance Staff

Roy Parsons, Contract Cleaning..... 1976 – 1980
Ralph Davis .....07-13-1980 – 09-03-1999
Jon Johnson.....03-28-1982 – 1985
William Arthur (Peewee) Guest.....08-17-1987 – 10-19-1987
A. V. Perkins.....11-22-1988 – 06-12-1992
Dwayne Littlejohn .....06-16-1992 - ?
John Shepperson.....10-1994 – 06-1997
Cal Ramsaur.....08-01-1995 – 2002
Allen Scism.....08-16-1999 – 2003
Katherine Guest.....10-10-1988 – present
Nathan Childers .....09-01-1999 – present
Rex Morris, Contract Cleaning.....2003 – present
Reven Guest .....2003 – present

Cooks & Hostesses

Ray Bailey, Hostess
Mrs. Grady Lovelace, Hostess
Mary Sue Jarrett, Hostess
Macie Grigg, Hostess
Amy Williams, Hostess
Mary Austell, Hostess
LaMae Greene, Cook
Barbara Hoash, Cook
Mr. Hord, Cook
Sarah Carouthers, Cook
Sharon Goforth, Cook
Estelle Miller, Cook
Delores Davis, Assistant Cook
Georgia Cooper, Cook .....04-05-1993 – present
Gloria Stidham, Assistant Cook.....01-01-1997 – 1998
Dianne Jamison, Assistant Cook.....11-12-1997 – present

Weekday Ministries Directors

Carol Bell ..... 1976 – 1979
Susie Conner Anthony..... 1979 – 1986
Betty Denkler ..... 1986 – 1997
Debbie Harrill..... 1997 – 1999
Pat Fletcher..... 2000 – 2003
Penny Corn.....2003 – present

Mother's Morning Out Co-Cordinators

Agusta Webster..... 1988 – 2004
Clara Spangler.....2004 – present

Instrumentalists

Pianists ..... Richard Putnam
Richard Chamberlain
Sarah Ellen Hamrick
Mary Alice Seals
Jeff Renn
Emily Monroe, 1993-present

Organists ..... Mrs. W.B. Nix
Mrs. W.L. Carroll
Miss Cora Barnett
Mrs. R.F. Tredway
Mrs. H.T. Hudson
Mrs. J.L. Suttle
Mrs. Lee M. White
Mrs. Dewitt Quinn
Miss Bertha Bostic
Miss Mary Helen Lattimore
Miss Mary Adelaide Roberts
Miss Eugenia Holland
Mrs. A. Pitt Beam
Miss Bertie Lee Suttle
Mrs. H.S. (Ruth) Howie Plaster, 1927-1969
Helen Gilliatt
Nancy Arrowood
Billy Summers
Connie Hodge
Beth Hamrick
Jeri Ledford, 1982-present

First Worship .....
Heather Helton, Keyboard, 2004-2005
Jennifer Zoellner, Keyboard, 2005-2006
Bryte Warrick, Keyboard, 2006-present
Nikao Wallace, Precussionist, 2007-present

WMU Presidents

Mrs. E.A. Harrison 1902
Mrs. George English 1904
Mrs. William Archer ..... 1906 – 1910
Mrs. C.J. Woodson ..... 1911 – 1912
Mrs. L.W. Swope ..... 1913 – 1914
Mrs. W.H. Blanton ..... 1914 – 1915
Mrs. William Archer 1916
Mrs. Colin Hull ..... 1917 – 1918
Mrs. W.J. Roberts ..... 1918 – 1919
Mrs. S.A. McMurry ..... 1920 – 1921
Mrs. J.R. Dover ..... 1922 – 1924
Mrs. John W. Suttle ..... 1925 – 1926
Mrs. W.B. Nix ..... 1926 – 1928
Mrs. T.W. Hamrick ..... 1929 – 1930
Mrs. J.A. Liles ..... 1931 – 1932
Mrs. Rush Stroup ..... 1933 – 1938
Mrs. B.M. Jarrett ..... 1939 – 1940
Mrs. Rush Stroup ..... 1940 – 1945
Mrs. Fred Swift ..... 1946 – 1948
Mrs. George Carpenter ..... 1949 – 1950
Mrs. Lowery Austell ..... 1951 – 1952
Mrs. Cecil Gilliatt ..... 1953 – 1954
Mrs. John Wilkins ..... 1955 – 1956
Mrs. Alton Hopper ..... 1957 – 1958
Mrs. John Ed Davis, Jr. ..... 1959 – 1960
Mrs. Paris L. Yelton ..... 1961 – 1962
Mrs. Harold W. Causby ..... 1963 – 1964
Mrs. Lloyd Bost ..... 1965 – 1966
Miss Laura Cornwell ..... 1967 – 1968

WMU Directors

Evelyn West ..... 1969 – 1970
Janice Boyles ..... 1970 – 1971
Becky Hamrick ..... 1971 – 1973
Janice Boyles ..... 1973 – 1974
Judy LeCroy ..... 1974 – 1976
Evelyn West ..... 1976 – 1978
Cindy Binion ..... 1978 – 1980
Nora Mauney ..... 1980 – 1982
Margaret Litton ..... 1982 – 1986

Lynn Moss ..... 1986 – 1988
Ethel Marie Kelly ..... 1988 – 1990
Edith Hoffman ..... 1990 – 1992
Polly Willis ..... 1992 – 1994
Ethel Marie Kelly ..... 1994 – 1995
Ginny Spears ..... 1995 – 1998
Becky Hamrick ..... 1998 – 2000
Mary Elizabeth Plyler ..... 2000 – 2002
Dorothy Young ..... 2002 – 2004
Judy Hawkins ..... 2004 – 2006
Dawn Anthony ..... 2006 – 2008

Deacon Chairs (1947 – 2007)

1947 ..... W. L. Angel
1948 ..... O. M. Mull
1949 ..... C. M. King
1950 ..... C. M. King
1951 ..... Walter Fanning
1952 ..... Walter Fanning
1953 ..... Paul Wilson
1954 ..... George Byrd
1955 ..... L. T. Hamrick
1956 ..... J. F. Abernathy
1957 ..... F. O. Champion
1958 ..... James L. Kendrick
1959 ..... Lloyd Bost
1960 ..... E. Floyd Farris
1961 ..... J. Edwin Spangler
1962 ..... Paris Yelton
1963 ..... Lloyd Bost
1964 ..... Paul Wilson
1965 ..... Wayne Caudill
1966 ..... Lamar Young
1967 ..... Joe E. Cabaniss
1968 ..... Jim Horn
1969 ..... George Hamrick
1970 ..... W. B. (Bill) Wilder
1971 ..... John Hawkins
1972 ..... F. O. Champion
1973 ..... George Byrd
1974 ..... Hugh Mauney
1975 ..... Don Allen
1976 ..... Harold Causby
1977 ..... J.A. West
1978 ..... George Hamrick
1979 ..... Art Moss, Jr.
1980 ..... DeMar Boyles
1981 ..... Dale Edwards
1982 ..... Fred Flowers
1983 ..... Dean Garver
1984 ..... C. J. Hill
1985 ..... Robert Cabaniss
1986 ..... Linton Suttle
1987 ..... Emory Allen
1988 ..... Jim Corn
1989 ..... Joe Wright
1990 ..... Jimmy Greene
1991 ..... Lloyd Bost
1992 ..... Rodney Brown
1993 ..... Ken Crawley
1994 ..... Stephen Jones
1995 ..... Rick Bowling
1996 ..... Becky Hamrick*
1997 ..... Bill Cullum
1998 ..... Chris White
1999 ..... Fred Flowers
2000 ..... Danny Hawkins
2001 ..... Drew Van Horn
2002 ..... Tebin McDowell
2003 ..... Skip Warrick
2004 ..... David Qualls
2005 ..... Danny Hawkins
2006 ..... Chris Folk
2007 ..... Bill Cullum

First and only female chair

First Baptist Church Membership

As of June, 2008

Abercrombie Jr., Mr. Terry
Adams, Mrs. Carrie
Adams, Rev. Marion
Allen, Mrs. Annice
Allen, Mrs. Barbara
Allen, Mrs. Beatrice
Allen, Mrs. Becky
Allen, Mr. Bobby
Allen, Mr. William C.
Allen, Mrs. Denise
Allen, Mr. Don
Allen, Mr. Eugene
Allen, Mrs. Hazel
Allen, Dr. Joe
Allen, Mr. Justin
Allen, Mr. Keith
Allen, Mrs. Loretta
Allen, Mrs. Marjorie
Allen, Mrs. Susan
Allen, Mrs. Tonya
Allen, Mr. Tyler
Alley, Mr. Matt
Anderson, Mrs. Ruth
Angevine, Dr. Anne
Anthony, Mrs. Dawn
Anthony Jr., Mr. Irvin
Anthony, Mrs. Margaret
Anthony, Miss Natalie
Arakelian, Mrs. Shirley
Arndt, Mrs. Rachel
Arndt, Mr. Ray
Arthur, Miss Jennifer
Arthur, Mrs. Susan
Arton, Mrs. Barbara
Bailey, Mrs. Darlene
Bailey, Mr. Hoyt
Bailey, Miss Katie
Bailey, Mr. Scott
Baity, Mrs. Beth
Baker, Mrs. Laraine
Baker, Mr. Larry
Baldree, Mr. David
Baldree, Mr. J. D.
Baldree, Mrs. Margaret
Ballard, Mr. Lacy
Ballard, Mrs. Montrose
Bankhead, Miss Anna Grace
Bankhead, Mrs. Gracie
Bankhead, Mrs. Jean
Bankhead, Mr. John
Bankhead, Mr. Scott
Bankhead, Mr. Will
Barnes, Mr. Adam
Barnes, Miss Karen
Barrett, Ms. Angie
Barrick, Mrs. Jenelle
Bartlett, Mrs. Jennifer
Bason, Mr. Nickolas
Bason, Mr. Zachary
Beam, Mrs. Barbara
Beam, Mr. William
Beam Jr., Mr. Dennis
Beam, Mr. Franklin
Beam, Mr. Lee
Beam, Miss Logan
Beam, Mrs. Mary B.
Beam, Mrs. Mary D.
Beam, Mrs. Susan
Beam, Mr. Tripp
Beam Jr., Mr. Zeb
Beaver, Miss Amanda
Beaver, Mrs. Sharon
Beckham, Mrs. Dorothy
Benfield, Mrs. Nina
Berkebile, Ms. Elizabeth
Berry, Mrs. Carolyn
Berry, Dr. Donald
Berry, Miss Katie
Berry, Miss Rebekah
Best, Mr. Herman
Best, Mrs. Margaret
Biggerstaff, Mrs. Elizabeth
Biggerstaff, Miss June
Bingham, Mrs. Becky
Bissette, Mrs. Louise
Bivins, Mr. Glenn
Bivins, Mrs. Martha
Blackburn, Mrs. Peggy
Blake, Mr. Alex
Blake, Mrs. Jane
Blanton, Spc. Benjamin
Blanton, Mrs. Betty Jean
Blanton, Mr. William
Blanton, Mrs. Catherine
Blanton, Mrs. Glennie
Blanton, Miss Hazel
Blanton, Mr. John
Blanton, Mrs. Mary Ella
Blanton, Mr. Sam
Blanton, Miss Susan
Bolt, Mrs. Jo
Bolt, Mr. Michael
Bonner, Mrs. Flossie
Bonner, Dr. Frank
Borders, Mrs. Beverly
Borders, Mrs. Mary Lee
Borders, Mr. Matthew
Borders, Mr. Robert
Borders, Mr. Spencer
Borders, Mr. Steve
Borders, Mrs. Vickie
Borders, Mr. Will
Bost, Mrs. Virginia
Bowen, Mr. James

Boyles, Mrs. Janice
Bralley, Miss Becca
Bralley, Mr. Gaylord
Bralley, Mrs. Jo
Bralley, Miss Meg
Branton, Mr. Gene
Branton, Mrs. Jean
Breidinger, Mrs. Pauline
Brewer, Mr. Bud
Brewer, Mrs. Martha
Bridges, Mrs. Betty
Bridges, Mr. Charles
Bridges, Mr. David
Bridges, Mr. James
Bridges, Mrs. Jessica
Bridges, Miss Kate
Bridges, Mr. Norman
Bridges, Mrs. Virginia
Brinkley, Mr. Kenneth
Brinton, Miss Danielle
Brinton, Mr. Matt
Brinton, Mr. Matthew
Brinton, Miss Natalie
Brinton, Mrs. Renee
Brooks, Mr. Ben
Brooks, Mr. Collin
Brooks, Mrs. Libby
Brooks, Mr. Mark
Brooks, Mrs. Pat
Brooks, Miss Rebekah
Brown, Mrs. Amber
Brown, Miss Amy
Brown, Mrs. Billie
Brown, Miss Laney
Brown, Mrs. Marsha
Brown, Mr. Rodney
Bruce, Mrs. Ruby
Bruner, Mrs. Keeley
Bryant, Miss Bethany
Bryant, Mrs. Betsy
Bryant, Miss Fereby
Bryant, Mr. Terry
Bryce, Mrs. Frances D.
Bryson, Mrs. Freida
Bryson, Mr. Hale
Burch, Mr. Chuck
Burch, Miss Danielle
Burch, Mrs. Franki
Burch, Mr. Travis
Burgin, Mr. Robert
Burgin, Mrs. Katherine
Burris, Mrs. Cordelia
Burris, Mrs. Heather
Burrus, Mrs. Maude
Butler, Mrs. Marion
Butler, Mr. Max
Byers, Mrs. Lois
Byrd, Mrs. Helen
Cabaniss, Mr. Garry
Cabaniss, Mr. Joe E.
Cabaniss, Mr. Joe T.
Cabaniss, Mrs. Karen
Cabaniss, Mrs. Mableen
Cabaniss, Mrs. Norma
Cabiness, Mrs. Anita
Cabiness, Mr. Webb
Callahan, Mrs. Margaret
Canipe, Mrs. Helen
Canipe, Mrs. Nell
Canoy, Mrs. Cindy
Canoy, Mr. Rob
Canoy, Dr. Robert W.
Canoy, Mr. Ryan
Cansler, Miss Ashton
Cansler, Ms. Tina
Cantrell, Mr. Lewis
Carey, Mrs. Edith
Carpenter, Miss Darcilla
Carpenter, Mr. Steven
Carpenter, Mrs. Terri
Carsno, Mr. Matthew
Carter, Mr. Jeff
Carter, Mrs. Katherine
Cash, Mrs. Dot
Caudill, Mrs. Jacqueline
Causby, Mrs. Rebecca
Causby, Mr. David
Causby, Mr. Harold
Causby, Mrs. Polly
Cave, Ms. Julia
Chamberlain, Mrs. Marjorie
Clarke, Mrs. Frances
Click Jr., Mr. W. C.
Clontz, Miss Alexandria
Coble, Mrs. Blanche
Cole, Mrs. Amanda
Cole, Mrs. Jan
Cole, Mr. Nick
Cole, Mr. Scott
Conner, Mr. Bill
Cook, Mrs. Martha
Cooke, Mrs. Christine
Corn, Mr. Jim
Corn, Mrs. Penny
Corn, Mr. Will
Costner. Mr. Bert
Costner, Mrs. Brenda
Costner, Mr. J. Christopher
Costner, Mr. Donald R.
Costner, Mr. Elbert
Costner, Mr. Steve
Cox, Mrs. Glenda
Cranford, Mrs. Claire
Cranford, Mr. Lorin
Craver, Mrs. Adelaide
Crawford, Mrs. Florence
Crawley, Miss Heather
Crawley, Mr. Ken
Crawley, Mrs. Mary
Crosby, Mrs. LaVerne
Culbertson, Miss Anna
Culbertson, Miss Leigh Ellen
Cullum, Mr. Bill
Cullum, Mr. Billy
Cullum, Mrs. Judy
Cunningham, Mrs. Vera

Curtis, Mrs. Brenda
Curtis, Mr. Steve
Czerr, Mrs. Regina
Davenport, Mr. Christopher
Davenport, Mr. Scott
Davidson, Ms. Susan
Davis, Mrs. Blanche
Davis, Mr. Cass
Davis Jr., Mr. Fred Delane
Davis, Mrs. Debbie H.
Davis, Mrs. Debbie D.
Davis, Mr. Hoyle
Davis, Miss Libby
Davis, Mrs. Lois
Davis, Ms. Lynda
Davis, Mrs. Mary Lou
Davis, Mrs. Mildred K.
Davis, Mr. Mitchell
Davis, Mr. Ralph
Davis, Mr. Randall
Davis, Mr. Russell
Davis, Mrs. Shirleen
Davis, Mr. Sonny
Davis, Mr. Tim
Dedmon, Mrs. Amy Lee
Dedmon, Miss Margaret Ann
Depriest, Mrs. Betty
Dillingham, Mr. Robin
Dills, Rev. Robert
Dills, Mrs. Jackie
Dixon, Mr. Christopher
Dixon, Mrs. Jo
Dixon, Ms. Kathy
Dixon, Mr. Mike
Dixon, Mrs. Rachel
Dryden, Mrs. Donna
Dryden, Mr. Eric
Dubre Jr., Mr. Leroy
Duncan, Ms. Debra
Duncan, Mr. Jeff
Duncan, Mr. Scott
Eades, Mrs. Cecelia
Eaves, Mrs. Mary Alice
Edney, Miss Debra
Edney, Mrs. Fidelia
Edney, Mr. W. Gaither
Edwards, Mr. W. Dale
Edwards, Mrs. Joan
Edwards, Mrs. Shannon
Eeds, Mrs. Kathryn
Eeds, Mr. Paul
Eighmy Sr., Mr. Eugene
Eighmy, Mrs. Marian
Elliott, Mr. Michael
Ellis, Mr. Justin
Ellis, Mrs. Katherine
Ellis, Mrs. Polly
Elmore, Mrs. Emma
Emmert, Mrs. Ann
England, Mrs. Leanne
Erikson, Mrs. Megan
Erikson, Mr. Peter
Eskridge, Mr. Robert
Eskridge, Mrs. Jeanne
Eskridge, Mr. Leland Stanford
Evans, Mr. John
Evans, Mrs. Susan
Falls, Mr. Albert
Falls, Mrs. Gwen
Flowers, Mr. Fred
Flowers, Mrs. Joan
Folk, Mr. Chris
Folk, Miss Kali
Folk, Miss Logan
Folk, Mrs. Tonda
Foster, Mrs. Jean
Freeman, Mrs. Judith
Galloway, Mr. Shannon
Gamble, Mrs. Minnie
Gammons, Mrs. Linda
Gammons, Mr. Michael
Gardner, Mr. William S.
Gardner, Mr. Cameron
Gardner, Mrs. Emily
Gardner III, Mr. O. Max
Garver, Mr. Dean
Garver, Rev. Frank
Garver, Mrs. Josie
Garver, Mrs. Sandra
Gettys, Mr. James Steven
Gibson, Mrs. Barbara
Gibson, Mrs. Bobbie
Gibson, Miss Joan
Gilliatt, Mrs. Helen
Gilliatt, Dr. Lee
Gloege, Mr. Donald
Gloege, Miss Elizabeth
Gloege, Mrs. Mary
Goforth, Ms. Martha
Gold, Miss Cassie
Gold, Mr. Harry Gene
Gold, Mrs. Mary
Gold, Mrs. Patricia
Goodman, Mrs. Margaret
Graham, Mrs. Joyce
Graves, Miss Allie
Graves, Mr. Dana
Graves, Mrs. Katie
Green, Miss Kelly
Greene, Miss Ashleigh
Greene, Miss Jewell
Greene, Mr. Mark
Greene, Mrs. Mary Sue
Greene, Mrs. Sara
Griffin, Mrs. Anna
Griffin, Mrs. Ruth
Griffin, Mr. Walter
Grigg, Mrs. Rebecca
Grigg, Mrs. Betty
Grigg, Mr. Dayne
Grigg, Mrs. Dot
Groce, Mrs. Christy
Grose, Mr. David
Grose, Mr. Michael
Grose, Ms. Michelle
Grose, Mrs. Susan

Guay, Mrs. Anita
Hall, Mrs. Barbara
Hall, Mr. Charles
Hall, Mr. George
Hall, Mrs. Karen
Hall, Miss Lucy
Hall, Miss Patty
Hall, Miss Rebecca
Halloran, Mrs. Vicki
Hames, Mrs. Ann
Hamrick, Mrs. Ann
Hamrick, Mrs. Becky
Hamrick, Mrs. Beth
Hamrick, Mr. Buddy
Hamrick, Miss Carrie
Hamrick, Miss Cynthia
Hamrick, Mr. George
Hamrick Jr., Dr. Jack
Hamrick, Mr. John Berry
Hamrick III, Mr. John C.
Hamrick, Miss Logan
Hamrick, Mrs. Lorene
Hamrick, Miss Lori
Hamrick, Miss Lynn
Hamrick, Mrs. Margaret
Hamrick, Mrs. Martha
Hamrick Jr., Mr. C. Rush
Hamrick, Mr. Steve
Hamrick Jr., Mr. Thomas Beatty
Hamrick, Mr. Tucker
Hamrick, Mrs. Vickie
Hanna, Mr. Joseph Eben
Hanna, Mrs. Margaret
Harden Jr., Mr. Michael
Harden, Miss Michelle
Harden, Mr. Mike
Harden, Mrs. Rona
Hare, Mrs. Rebecca
Harrill, Mrs. Debi
Harrill, Mr. Fred
Harrill Jr., Mr. Fred
Harris, Dr. Bernard
Harris, Mr. George Burel
Harris, Mr. Leon
Harris, Mrs. Pam
Harris, Mrs. Patricia
Hartley, Ms. Amy
Hartley, Mrs. Rebecca
Hartley, Mr. Keith
Hartman, Mr. Josh
Hartman, Miss Megan
Hartman, Mrs. Sharon
Hastings, Mr. Kelly
Hastings, Mrs. Libby
Hastings, Mr. Norris
Hawkins, Mr. Danny
Hawkins, Mrs. Judy
Hawkins, Mr. Michael
Hawkins, Mrs. Peggy
Hawley, Mrs. Trisha
Hayek, Dr. Charlie
Hayek, Mr. Luke
Hayek, Mrs. Marcie
Hayek, Miss Meredith
Heath, Miss Amanda Lake
Heath, Mrs. Angela
Heath, Mr. Charles
Heath, Miss Hadley
Heath, Mr. Scott
Heffner, Mr. Gary
Helms, Mr. Alex
Helms, Mrs. Pamela
Helms, Mr. Fred Wayne
Helton, Mrs. Gloria
Helton, Miss Jennifer
Helton, Mr. Stephen
Hendrick, Mrs. Barbara
Hendrick, Mr. Boyd
Hendrick, Mr. Jack
Hendrick, Mr. Joe
Hendrick, Mrs. Marie
Hendrick, Mrs. Mary Anne
Hendrick, Mrs. Rachel
Hendrick, Mr. Robin
Henry, Mrs. Carol
Henry, Mr. Charles
Henry, Mrs. Kathleen
Henry, Mr. Steven
Hester, Mr. Thomas
Hicks, Mrs. Dorothy
Higgins, Mrs. Chris
Higgins, Mr. Jim
Higgins, Miss Katie
Hill, Mr. Robert E.
Hill, Mrs. Ruth
Hoard, Rev. Carol Ann
Hoard, Mr. Joel
Hoffman, Mrs. Edith
Holbrook, Mr. Chad
Holbrook, Mr. Eddie
Holbrook, Mrs. Millie
Holcomb, Mr. H. Neil
Holcomb, Mr. Stephen
Holleman, Mrs. Lib
Holleman, Rev. Perry
Holloman, Mrs. Doris
Holt, Miss Susan
Hope, Mrs. Barbara
Horn, Mr. Bill
Horn, Mr. Charles
Horn, Mrs. Elaine
Horn, Mrs. Jeri
Horn, Mrs. Linda
Horn, Mr. William James
Horne, Mr. Chris
Horne, Miss Emily
Horne, Mrs. Jean
Horne, Miss Katie
Horne, Miss Kristen
Houser, Mrs. Frances
Howard, Miss Mary Agnes
Hoyle, Mr. Charles
Hoyle, Mr. Hubert
Hoyle, Mr. Jerry
Hoyle, Mrs. Myra
Hoyle, Mrs. Ruth

Hucks, Ms. Margie
Hudson, Mrs. Carol Ann
Hudson, Mrs. Frances
Hudson IV, Mr. Hill
Hudson III, Mr. Hill
Hudson, Mr. L. Morris
Hudson, Miss Leah
Hudson, Mrs. Sue
Huffman, Mrs. Brenda
Huffman, Mr. Ken
Hughes, Mrs. Jackie
Hughes, Mr. Steven
Hummel, Ms. Rebecca
Humphries, Mrs. Lola
Hunsinger, Mr. John
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Painting of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in the First Baptist sanctuary

This church history was instigated by Polly Causby, edited by her with the help of Becky Hamrick and Pastor Tony Tench, researched by several members of First Baptist Church and written by J.A. West.

J.A. was born and reared in Wilmington, NC, served three years in the Navy during World War II, and was educated at Wake Forest College (now Wake Forest University) and Duke University Law School. In 1950 he married Evelyn Brown, moved to Shelby, and joined First Baptist Church. He practiced law with C.C. "Cobby" Horn and Charlie Horn for 44 years.

His only training in writing was in a high school journalism course. He has written a weekly opinion column for the *Star*, Shelby's daily newspaper for several years, and also for two years wrote a monthly seniors column for the Gaston edition of the *Charlotte Observer*. Recently he wrote an article for a book published by the Cleveland County Scribes.

Everyone who has worked on the church history is a volunteer and very much aware that they are amateurs. It is their hope that the Lord and a gracious congregation will enjoy their two and a half year effort.

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History began when God created man and woman and a world in which they would live. Christian history began when God sent Jesus to live and die and live again for all who would accept Him. First Baptist Church history began in 1847 when a group of believers formed the church and met just off the court square in Shelby, North Carolina. The first history of the church covered the period from 1847 to 1970. This history covers the period from 1970 through 2007. The church as been on mission for 160 years.

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